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A week in photography

While you generally can't use old film lenses on most DSLRs, you may not be aware that it's a lot easier with mirrorless cameras. Classic glass can be given a new lease of life, helping you build up a lens system for your shiny new mirrorless. As our resident mirrorless sage Andy Westlake explains on pages 16-20, there is a good selection of old lenses out there, and he discusses everything you need to know to get them working on your camera. When you consider how much higher-end mirrorless lenses can cost, there is some serious money to be saved here (and it's fun). Other highlights of this packed issue include a buyer's guide to the most effective HDR software, a review of the new Sigma 56mm f/1.4 and a test of one of the most secure portable hard drives you can buy.
Nigel Atherton, Editor

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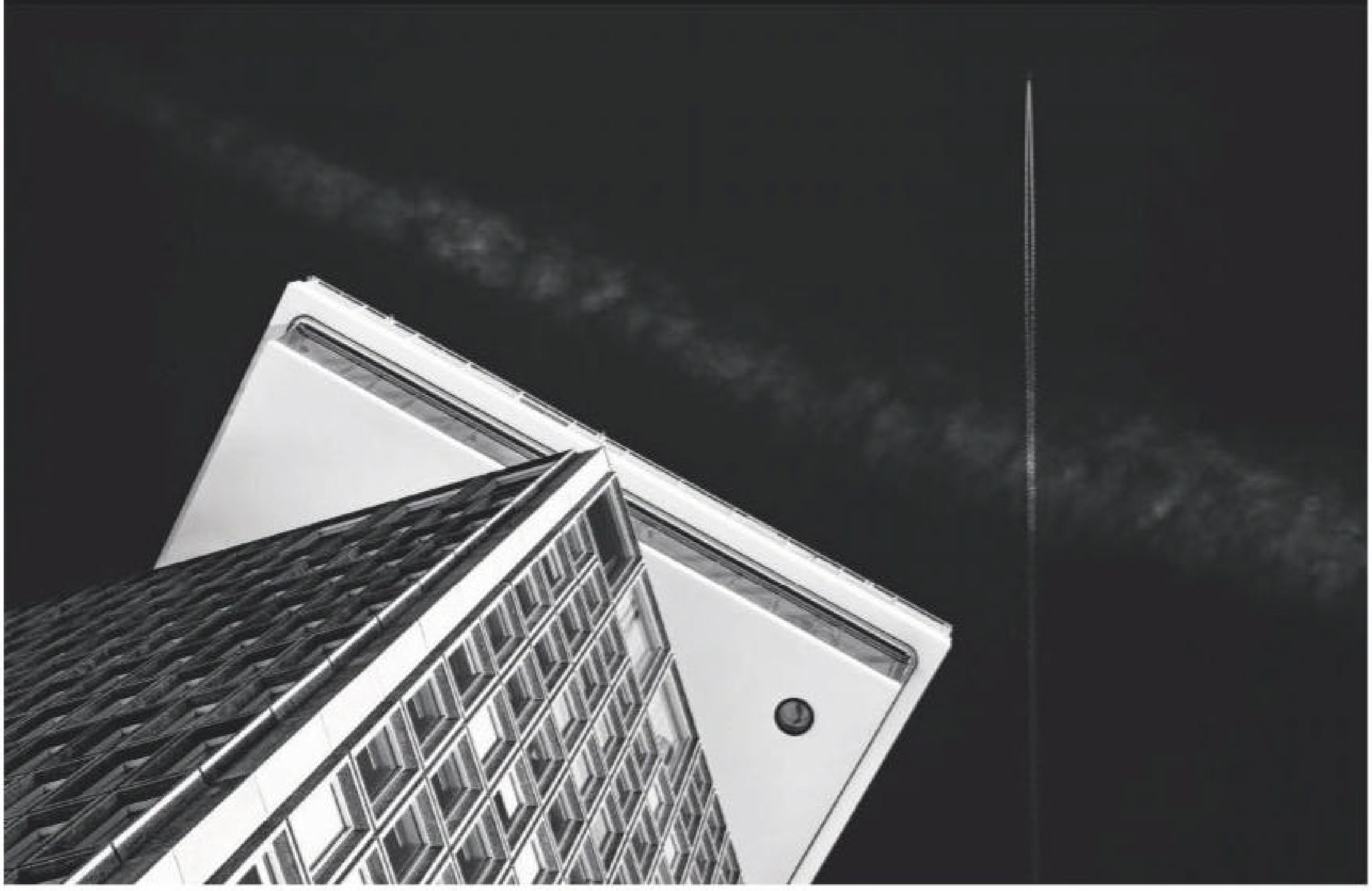
ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK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A'dam Lookout tower

by Steven Gosling

Nikon D850, 24-70mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 64

This high-contrast mono shot was uploaded to our Twitter page using the hashtag #appicoftheweek by photographer Steven Gosling (@stevengoslingphotography). He tells us, 'This image was taken looking up at the A'dam Lookout tower on the north side of the river in Amsterdam. I had originally travelled to photograph the striking architecture of the Eye Film Museum, but the A'dam building is next door. The low-lying but bright winter sun really hit the building with stark contrast and I knew the deep blue sky would look amazing in monochrome. The aircraft was moving quickly and I took numerous shots at different angles.'

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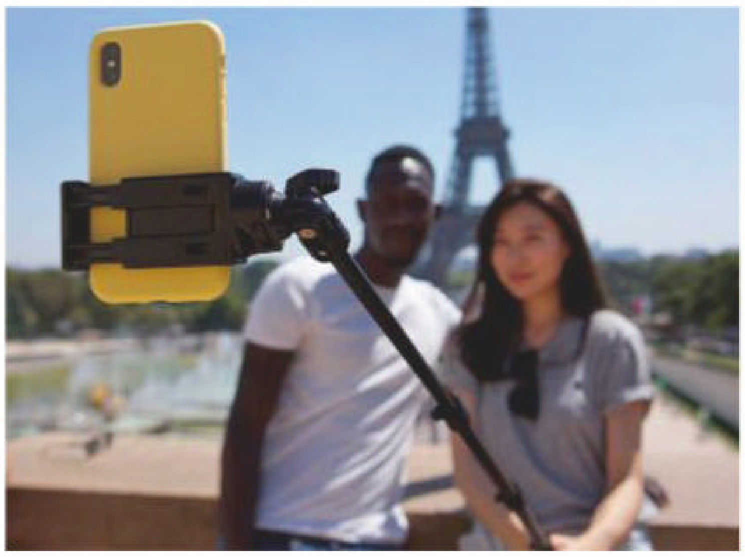
NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Geoff Harris



DxOMark now scores selfie quality

DxOMark scores are a well-known benchmark for lens performance, and the company is now testing front cameras on smartphones. According to DxOMark, the Google Pixel 3 and Samsung Galaxy Note 9 stand out. 'Images captured with the Google device show slightly stronger contrast and a cooler white balance. The Samsung is a little better at exposing for faces.' Full details: www.dxomark.com.

Kenko teleconverters for Canon EF and Nikon F

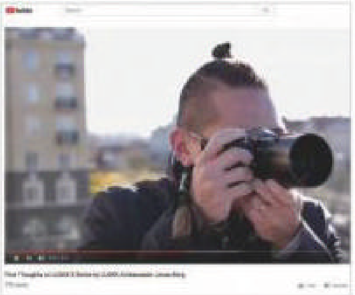
Two 2x and 1.4x teleconverters for Nikon F and Canon EF mount lenses have been released by Kenko, and distributed in the UK by Intro2020. The Teleplus HD pro 1.4x DGX and Teleplus HD pro 2x DGX feature redesigned optics for peak performance, according to Kenko. Prices range from £219 to £269. See www.intro2020.co.uk.

RPS applause for Clapp

Noted landscape/travel photographer and AP contributor, David Clapp, has been given a direct fellowship (FRPS) by the RPS. 'I am very honoured,' he told AP. 'Over the last decade I have strived to become the very best I can in all disciplines. I am certain that my ideas, future contributions and direct involvement in the RPS Distinctions Panel will make this a year to remember.'

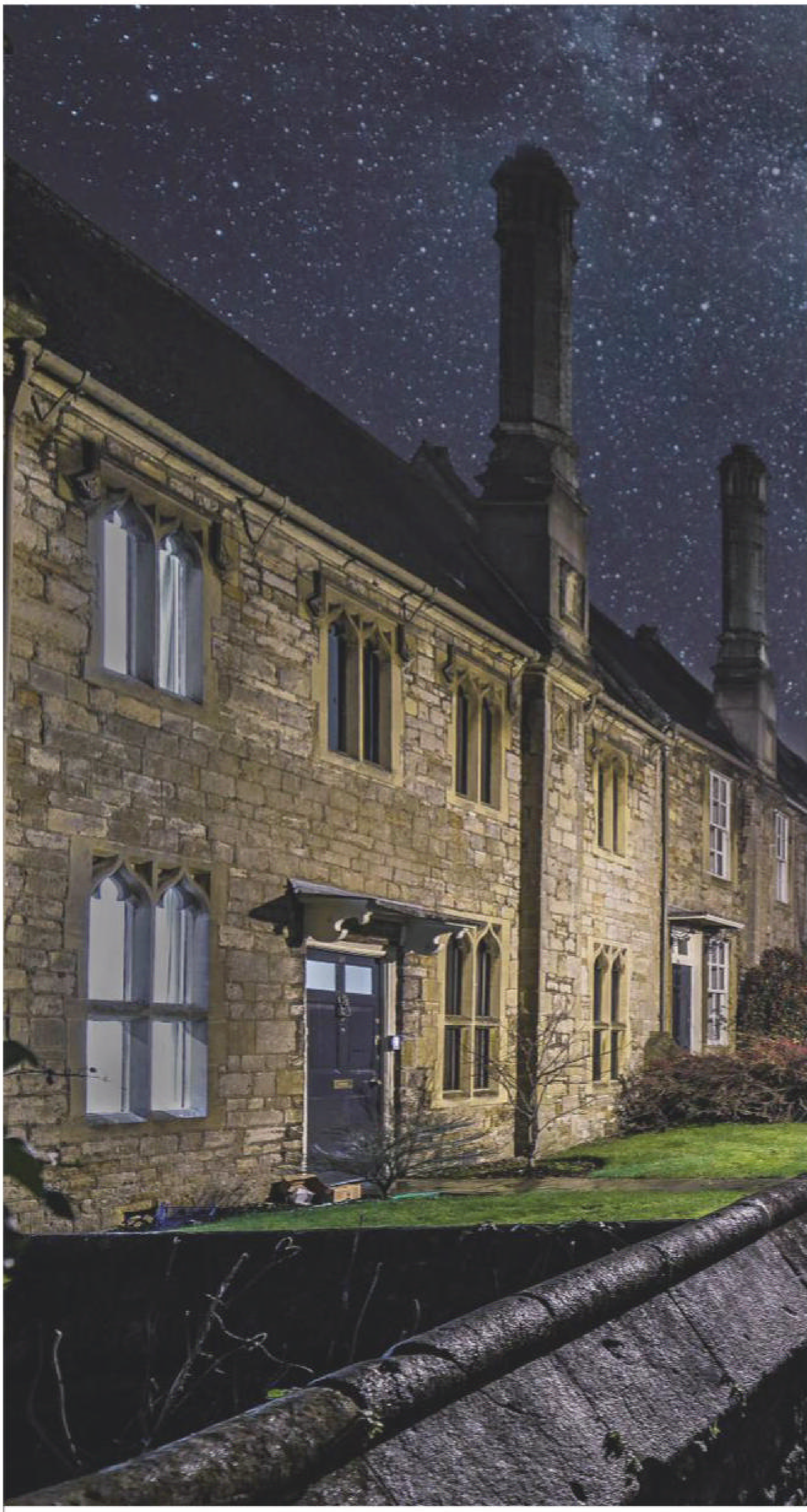
New videos on full-frame Panasonics

Panasonic has released a series of videos about its full-frame 47MP S1R and the 24MP S1 mirrorless cameras. The cameras use the Leica L-Mount standard as part of the company's participation in the L-Mount Alliance with Leica and Sigma. See bit.ly/panasonicyoutube for more details. The S1R and S1 and a range of new lenses are released at the end of March.



Right royal photography events

At The Queen's Gallery near Buckingham Palace, army photographer Rupert Frere is running a creative photography course (from 9-10 February, £175), and on 20 March there is a lecture on Roger Fenton, the first war photographer (free with exhibition ticket). Also Windsor Castle hosts a lecture on Victorian photography on March 13 (£15).

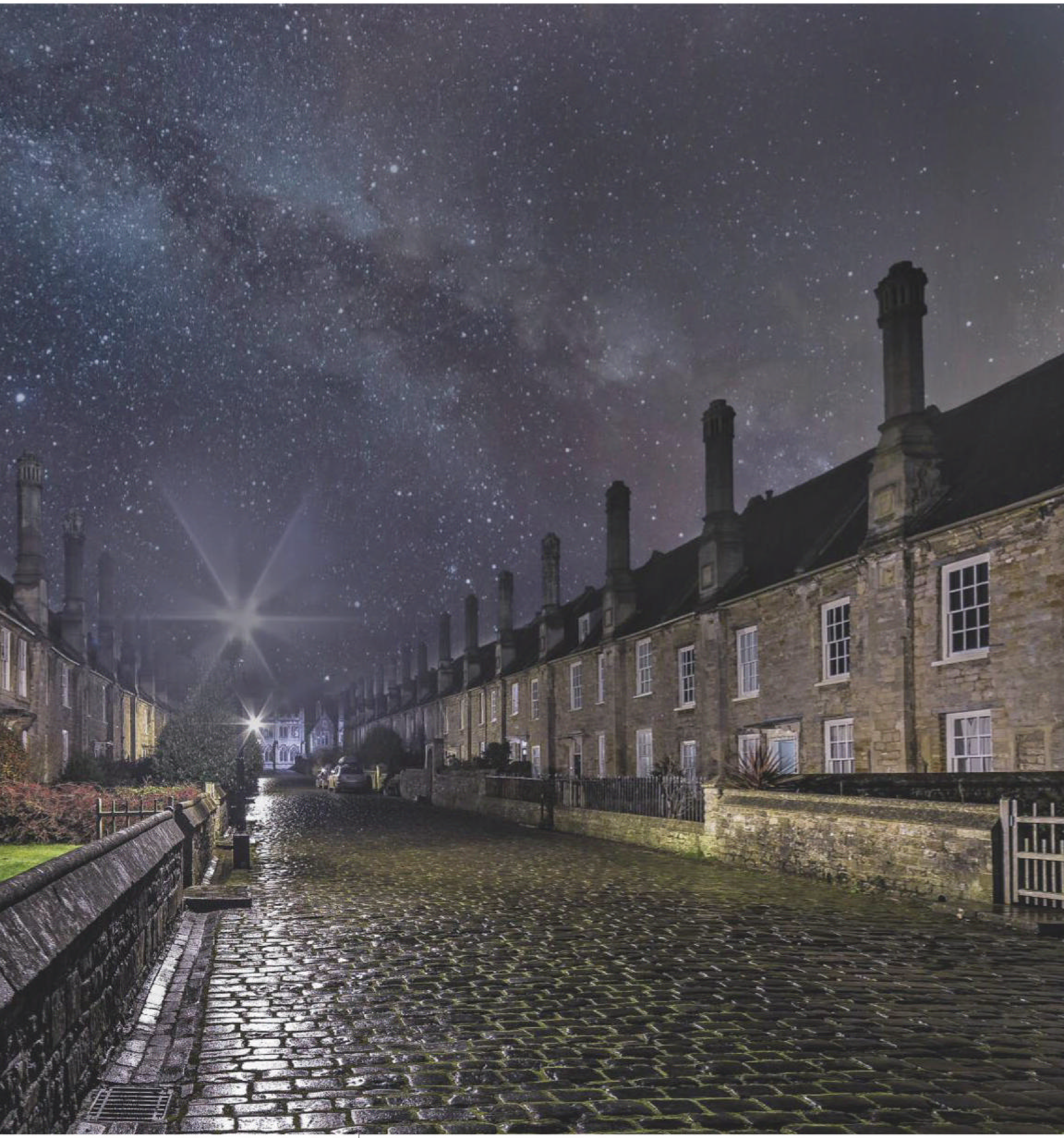


© ROSE ATKINSON

BIG picture

Europe's oldest residential street captured on camera

ROSE Atkinson's atmospheric shot of Vicars' Close in Wells, Somerset, was shortlisted in the Historic Photographer of the Year awards in 2018. Built over 650 years ago to house the Vicars Choral, Vicars' Close has been continuously inhabited by their successors. It is the most complete example of a medieval



close in the UK and is said to be the oldest purely residential street in Europe.

The shot is a blend of two exposures (one for the sky and one for the street). Atkinson says, 'It's one of my favourite places in Wells, where I live. I used the Milky Way to portray the timelessness of the place.'

To see more winning and shortlisted pictures from the awards, visit photographer.triphistoric.com.

Words & numbers

> Probably one of the worst things to happen to photography is that cameras have viewfinders
>
> **John Baldessari**
>
> American conceptual artist (1931-)

$195,000

The Buy it Now price on eBay for a rare contact sheet featuring revealing photos of Marilyn Monroe, as shot by Bert Stern

SOURCE: DPREVIEW.COM

© RPS

RPS makes creative move to Bristol for larger HQ

THE ROYAL Photographic Society (RPS) has relocated from its cramped HQ on the edge of Bath to much more spacious premises in The Paintworks, South Bristol – a 'creative quarter' which also houses the Martin Parr Foundation and is close to the city centre and Temple Meads train station.

The RPS's new HQ includes a 200m^2 exhibition space, along with a 101-seat auditorium, educational facility and admin offices. 'Our building brings a public exhibition space back to the RPS for the first time since 2001, so that it can show the best of photography to inspire and excite the public,' said chief operating officer Mike Taylor. The International Photography Exhibition 161 is the first show at the new HQ, featuring AP regular Harry Borden and 53 other luminaries. It officially opens on 7 February. See www.rps.org.

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World's first 48-megapixel phone camera launched

THE NEW Honor View 20 flagship smartphone is going all out to appeal to photographers. The 48-megapixel Sony IMX586 rear sensor is the highest resolution of its kind, and is a relatively large 1/2in CMOS device that measures 6.4x4.8mm. In addition, a special shooting mode, known as 48MP AI Ultra Clarity, is included and promises superior clarity and detail.

Working by taking several 48MP pictures at once, the mode collates together the best details from each photo to create one 48MP image – the use of a tripod is not required.

On the front of the phone, there's also a 25MP selfie camera, which sits in a unique 'notch-less' design which makes use of an ultra-small single hole to house the camera.

Honor is a sub-brand of leading phone manufacturer, Huawei. Smartphones under the Honor brand are generally available at a lower price – the View 20 can be picked up for as little as £499.

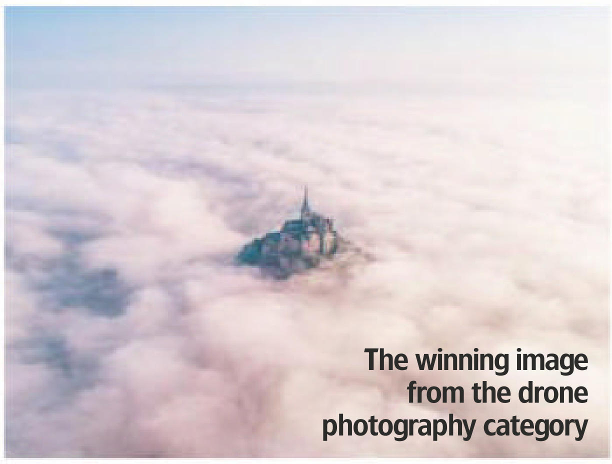
Other features that should appeal to photographers include Night Mode, which we've seen before in the likes of the Huawei Mate 20 Pro, and an impressively long battery life. It also comes with an advanced 3D rear camera. The Honor View 20 is available now.

The Honor View 20 smartphone has groundbreaking camera features

British Photography Awards' big night out

NOBODY can accuse the new British Photography Awards of starting off modestly, with the first-ever awards evening taking place in the opulent surroundings of London's Savoy Hotel at the end of January.

The inaugural BPA attracted a strong field of over 3,700 entries from across the country, with categories including Best Portrait Photographer, Best Drone Photographer, Best Documentary Photographer and Best Selfie Photographer. A People's Choice winner was also named for each category, with 74,000 public votes being submitted. 'These awards are pivotal in celebrating the rich heritage of our photographic culture,' said the organiser, Hugo Donnithorne-Tait. Several industry luminaries were also honoured for their contribution to photography, including Frans Lanting who was named International Photographer of the Year 2019, and fashion photographer Rankin who bagged a BPA Fellowship. For more information see www.britishphotographyawards.org.



© KONRAD PARUCH

The winning image from the drone photography category

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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Viewpoint David Crossland

A writer and photographer based in Berlin, David Crossland remembers the heady days of being able to make a living from stock photos

I started selling photos 20 years ago, submitting slides to stock libraries. It was fiddly work, printing off caption labels and shifting the photos around in the frames to correct sloping horizons. Then came online agencies and digital cameras, and the market took off. I focused on Alamy and quit my job as a reporter, dreaming of earning a living with my camera. For a while it wasn't even outlandish. By 2007, Alamy sales alone were paying my rent — $10,000 in gross revenue from just 64 sales, and the commission was a manageable 30% plus a small account fee.

The internet made stock photography more accessible to the masses of enthusiasts like me. I was happy to leave bread-and-butter shots of grinning office workers and jogging pensioners to others and still managed to sell what interested me – landscapes, festivals, the Siegfried Line and my son's rabbits.

Alas, the dream is now over. The market became flooded with sellable images and prices plummeted. My Alamy revenue has plunged 60% since that 2007 peak.

© DAVID CROSSLAND

My highest-selling photo – a Soviet-era Vostok space rocket on show in Moscow

Agencies are hanging on by chasing volumes while slashing prices. That's a shaky business model even for them but it's untenable for us because we can't expand our portfolios fast enough to make up for the price erosion. While my image total has quadrupled since 2007, Alamy's has expanded more than 15-fold to 155 million.

Commission hike

The pressure on agencies became evident in December with Alamy's shock announcement that it was hiking its commission to 60% from 50%. To its credit, Alamy backtracked a few weeks later after an outcry among its 60,000 contributors, declaring just before Christmas that the hike would only apply to photos that aren't exclusively available on its site. But it will still affect many photographers who have spread their images across a number of agencies.

As Alamy has pointed out, its commission remains below the industry average of 70% and I have to admit it remains the best of the agencies I deal with. The German library I supply to, Arco Images, only pays when I remind them, and Getty's iStock offers just 15% on non-exclusive images.

Alamy cited Brexit and the need to invest in growth as reasons for the fee increase. But cutting royalties must always be the last resort. Such cash grabs suggests a lack of genuine faith in the future. They also betray a disregard for contributors, which is symptomatic of the decline in the value of creative content while internet aggregators rake in profits.

I wish anyone still trying to make a living out of stock photography the best of luck. It will remain a sideline for me. I have no regrets, though. It's satisfying to think that my images are in textbooks, magazines and newspapers all over the world.

It's the love of photography that will keep me supplying stock images – and I suspect the same is true of many AP readers.

David Crossland is a writer and photographer based in Berlin. He tweets as **@DavidCrossland3**

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 12 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

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In next week's issue

On sale Tuesday 12 February

AP 2019 awards

We reveal the top cameras, lenses and accessories that we tested last year

© JAMES PATERSON

Lighten up

Take your photography to the next level with a home-studio lighting set-up

Photoshop Elements

Revitalise old prints by using these simple Photoshop techniques

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A new book on drone photography will provide lots of ideas and food for thought

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The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

Elizabeth Taylor photographed by Mark Shaw in a dress from Dior's spring/summer 1961 collection

© MARK SHAW

EXHIBITION

The Dior Collection

A showcase of fashion photography

If you have any interest in fashion, celebrity and portrait photography, then the latest exhibition at London's Proud Central is worthy of a visit. The Dior Collection is an exhibition of fashion photography which showcases the legendary designs of renowned designer Christian Dior. Known for revitalising both haute couture and ready-to-wear fashion, Dior continues to inspire today. The exhibition concentrates on the designer during the first two decades of the iconic brand. As such, it features works by some of the world's best and most well-known photographers of the forties, fifties, and sixties, including Mark Shaw, Norman Parkinson, Jerry Schatzberg and Bert Stern.

The show encompasses everything from polished editorial shots featuring well-known figures and celebrities shot for *LIFE* magazine, to behind-the-scenes studio snapshots. Christian Dior created his namesake company in 1946, and went on to become one of the world's most recognised names in fashion – some even credit him with 'reinventing' the female silhouette.

In 1947, Dior's first show celebrated the end of fabric rationing during the Second World War, and took the opportunity to step away from the conservative silhouettes of wartime styles. His new designs became synonymous with feminine and voluptuous shapes. The show made the cover of *LIFE*, and was dubbed 'The New Look' by *Harper's Bazaar*.

The four photographers presented in The Dior Collection examine the metamorphosis of Christian Dior in its early years. Norman Parkinson's images exhibit a mischievous eye in photoshoots, rather than a formal studio setting. Meanwhile, Jerry Schatzberg's shots show an insider's perspective into the world of models and designers. Those with a penchant for famous icons of the time, including Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, are catered for by Mark Shaw and Bert Stern's images. **Amy Davies**

At Proud Central, London (32 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6BP) from 7 February until 7 April 2019. Entrance is free.

Also out now

© MARTIN PARR/MAGNUM PHOTOS

EXHIBITION

Martin Parr: Return to Manchester

Runs at Manchester Art Gallery until 22 April 2019, entrance is free

A bit of a 'Marmite' figure, Martin Parr is nevertheless one of the most recognisable names in contemporary photography. He studied at Manchester Polytechnic between 1970 and 1973. As such, the city had a deep impact on him, being wildly different from his childhood home in suburban and affluent Surrey.

Over the past 40 years, Parr has returned to the northern city to document the lives of Mancunians. This exhibition brings together a wide selection of those photographs. There are black & white images from the 1970s and 1980s, alongside colour photos from 1986 and 2008. The exhibition aims to show how the lives of Mancunians have changed over the years, while exploring the continuity in how we live. A portrait of Manchester and its people in 2018 was also commissioned for the show. **Amy Davies**

BOOK

East London Photo Stories

Text by Rachel Segal Hamilton, Hoxton Mini Press, £19.95, 320 pages, hardback, ISBN 978 1 910566 42 8

East London Photo Stories brings together images from the first 13 books in the series of the same name. The work is diverse and beautifully executed. The book begins with a visual essay on Joseph Markovitch, who was 80 when photographer Martin Usborne first spotted him walking the streets of Hoxton. The images of the man who was perfectly at home among the changing environment of this now-hipster-filled corner of London are warm and kind.

We then move on to the quietly awe-inspiring women depicted in Jenny Lewis's One Day Young, holding their babies who are all less than a day old, through to Madeleine Waller's East London Swimmers and – my favourite – Chris Dorley Brown's Drivers in the 1980s. In these colour images, all shot on a Rolleiflex, we see the drudgery of being stuck in traffic, but with the added nostalgia of the fashions and car designs of the day. If you missed out on the individual books, then this compendium will help fill the void. ★★★★☆ **Ailsa McWhinnie**

They say the only constant is change, and this goes without saying for photographers and filmmakers. Staying current with technology seems so crucial. As new releases become more and more expensive each year, it's getting harder to know when to make the change.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Print your photographs!

I read with interest your article on printing in this week's AP (*New Year's Printing Resolutions,* 19 January). I am a Scottish Photographic Federation judge and lecturer and over the past few years have become increasingly dismayed at the decline in the quantity and quality of prints submitted in camera club competitions. For example I have just taken delivery of the images, both prints and PDIs (projected digital images) from a local camera club. There are 55 PDIs, but only 15 prints. As each member is allowed to enter three prints or three PDIs, this means that only five members have entered prints.

Over the past couple of years, in my visits to camera clubs to judge their images, I have tried to encourage members to produce prints, and not just ephemeral PDIs. The two main reasons given by those who don't print is that it is too difficult or too expensive. So I now have two sets of A4 prints which I show members. The colour set is of a performer at the Edinburgh Fringe, and is printed on a high-end printer costing just under £1,000, and also on an all-in-one printer which cost me £79. I used a top-quality paper costing around £1.75 for an A4 sheet, and budget paper from a high street retailer, costing around 40p per sheet. I display the four prints and ask the members which they prefer, and to identify the paper or printer.

To date, no one has got it right! Indeed many members prefer the print made on utility paper with the all-in-one printer. When all four prints are examined side by side, one can detect very minor differences in colour and contrast, but these are so slight that seen individually in isolation, it is impossible to tell one from another.

Admittedly the situation is different when it comes to black & white prints. The cheap printer cannot produce the same quality of pure blacks when compared with the high-end printer, with its five black/grey cartridges. It is difficult to avoid a cast of some colour – often magenta or green.

So I claim that it is not too expensive to produce prints, at least colour prints. And my little all-in-one can usually produce a print that would be perfectly acceptable in a camera club competition after a minimum of post-production effort.

I suspect that I may be a lone voice crying in the wilderness but I will keep trying to encourage camera club members to get and use a printer. After all, a print is a print is a print (to paraphrase Gertrude Stein) and viewing one does not require electronic equipment so it is not at the mercy of variability in the quality or set-up of such equipment.

Neil Scott FRPS

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG EVO PLUS MICROSD CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY

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Backing up photos on the move

There are several backup options for a photographer on the move. Essentially it is either the cloud or hardware. I don't always have data while travelling so a hardware solution is what I have been looking for, as cheaply as possible.

The ideal was the WD My Passport, but at £270 it was a bit steep for me (I still wanted it though and was kind of saving up). An alternative I used a couple of times was a portable HDD connected to a Raspberry Pi with some backup software developed by a guy called Dmitri Popov. However, it was a bit hit and miss and needed a power supply which wasn't always available. Then last week I came across the perfect solution (for me). I purchased a Toshiba T5 Portable SSD 500GB on impulse on an Amazon flash deal, connected it to an Anker data hub and plugged into that an SD card via adapter. All this was connected to an Android tablet (Samsung S3) and using a standard file manager app managed to copy 1,500 average 4MB photos, including some raw files, from my SD card to the Toshiba SSD in less than 1 minute. It doesn't need a separate power supply, it works from the tablet and it is super-fast and super-easy.

Granted it is not a super sleek solution but it is comprised of various bits that have several alternative uses giving me some extra flexibility. I have been searching for something to do this task for three years. For me this is perfect and I'm delighted.

Rick Corbishley

Sea of Steps

Your latest issue, AP 19 January, has a great take on the famous 'Sea of Steps' in Wells Cathedral – made famous by Frederick Evans over 100 years ago – by Jill Ledwidge of the Maghull Photography Club. I am very familiar with the city of Wells, and during November took the photograph above right, part of the Cathedral's impressive Remembrance display. Interestingly, in view of Amy Davies's Smartphones Round-up feature in the same issue, I took this with my iPhone 7, and the photograph received around 400 likes on the Facebook 'Churchcrawling - A Passion for Churches' page. I usually have my Olympus OM-D to hand,

© NICHOLAS LANCASTER

Nicholas used his iPhone 7 for this Wells Cathedral image

but on that occasion was travelling light and the iPhone certainly proved its worth. I'm due for an update in a few weeks' time so Amy's article is giving me food for thought, but I would also make the point that if you are wedded to the Apple 'system', with phone, iPad, desktop, etc., all synchronised so seamlessly (at least in my case), it is hard to contemplate changing brands.

Nicholas Lancaster

Modern software

We are very fortunate to live in a time when digital photo processing not only has advanced, but is still advancing rapidly. I own a Lumix G1, as well as some other Micro Four Thirds cameras. This weekend I had a need to reprocess some old photos. The Lumix G1 was and still is a great little camera. But the shadows tend to be filled with colour and luminosity noise. Ten years ago, the photo processing software could not clean up the G1's shadows. So I soon learnt to keep the shadows dark, as a way of hiding the noise. However, when I reprocessed the old raw files, I was pleased to find that it was now possible to completely remove all of the colour and luminosity noise, and to still retain lots of detail. At last I could bring out the details in the shadows. Modern software is breathing new life, and capabilities, into what is now a very old camera.

I stopped using Lightroom when it adopted the subscription model, because philosophically, I'd rather buy than rent my software. I now use ON1's Photo Raw, which has rapidly advanced into a non-destructive raw processor, which includes luminosity masks, protection filters, a well-developed layered and blended editing system, local adjustments, etc., as well as a fully developed effects package. Yes, there are modules which are still under development, such as focus stacking. But that leads to my other positive point. Hardly a month goes by, without yet another upgrade or refinement. I gather from my Adobe-using friends, that Adobe is launching upgrades of its own. Which will, no doubt, soon be matched by the competitors. In effect, the increased pressure in the photographic software marketplace is working to the advantage of all camera users, because the pressure is on to launch ever better and cleverer software.

Long may our hobby continue to thrive in such wonderful circumstances.

David Price

In defence of M4/3rds

Regarding Bob King's letter (*Inbox*, 12 January) questioning whether Micro Four Thirds has a future. I have been in photography for over 70 years – commercially, industrially, in retail management and distribution for one of the big camera companies, and as a hobby. In that time I have been fortunate to use dozens of cameras, from whole-plate Sandersons to full-frame SLRs to my current camera, the recently introduced Panasonic DC-G9 with a Leica/Panasonic 12-60mm f/2.8 lens. This is one of the sharpest and best lenses I have ever used: the camera is showerproof and incredibly versatile both for stills and video, and the Micro Four Thirds lenses are small, light and of excellent quality, particularly the Leica-based ones. If this is the future of this system then the future is good.

Undoubtedly the new full-frame mirrorless lenses are excellent and here to stay but they are generally so large and heavy that they negate some of the advantages of the digital systems for being small and light, which is so important for an aged person like me!

Stanley Groom

Stanley says the G9's quality (and lens) means the Micro 4/3rds future is good

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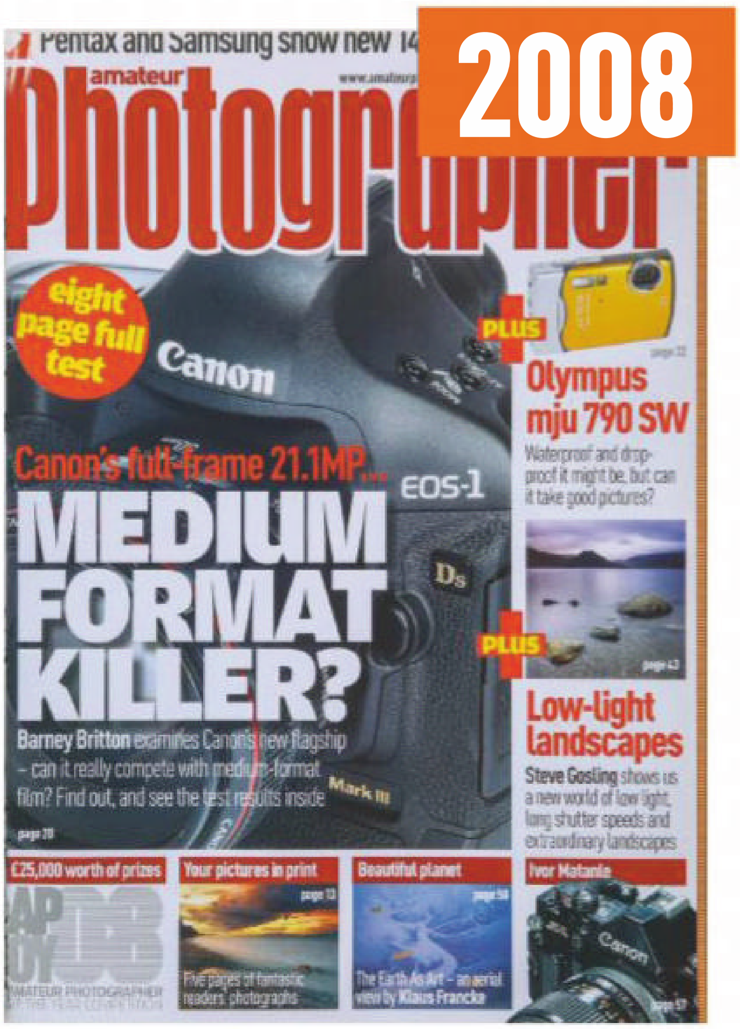
Back in the day

A wander through the AP archive. This week we pay a visit to February 2008


2008

Pentax and Samsung show new 14

amateur Photographer

eight page full test

Canon's full-frame 21.1MP...

MEDIUM FORMAT KILLER?

Barney Britton examines Canon's new flagship – can it really compete with medium-format film? Find out, and see the test results inside

page 20

PLUS

Olympus mju 790 SW

Waterproof and drop-proof it might be, but can it take good pictures?

PLUS

Low-light landscapes

Steve Gosling shows us a new world of low light, long shutter speeds and extraordinary landscapes

£25,000 worth of prizes

Your pictures in print

Five pages of fantastic readers' photographs

Beautiful planet

The Earth As Art – an aerial view by Klaus Francke

Ivor Matanle

SUDDENLY we find ourselves back in the halcyon days of February 2008 (actually, not that halcyon as the global economic slump was looming). Anyway, the Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III had just come out, and we were pondering whether its full-frame 21MP sensor would be so good that makers of medium-format film cameras would grovel before it in the dust. No, as it turned out, but this cover certainly grabs the attention. This excitement over breaking the 20MP barrier is also a salutary reminder of how far full-frame sensor technology has come in the past 11 years. Other highlights include a great piece on low-light landscapes by the still-very-relevant Steve Gosling, and a review of the not-so-relevant Olympus mju 790 SW (that's easy for you to say). Meanwhile the prolific Ivor Matanle was writing about vintage Canons – we're sad to report that Ivor passed away recently, so we send our very best wishes to his family and friends.

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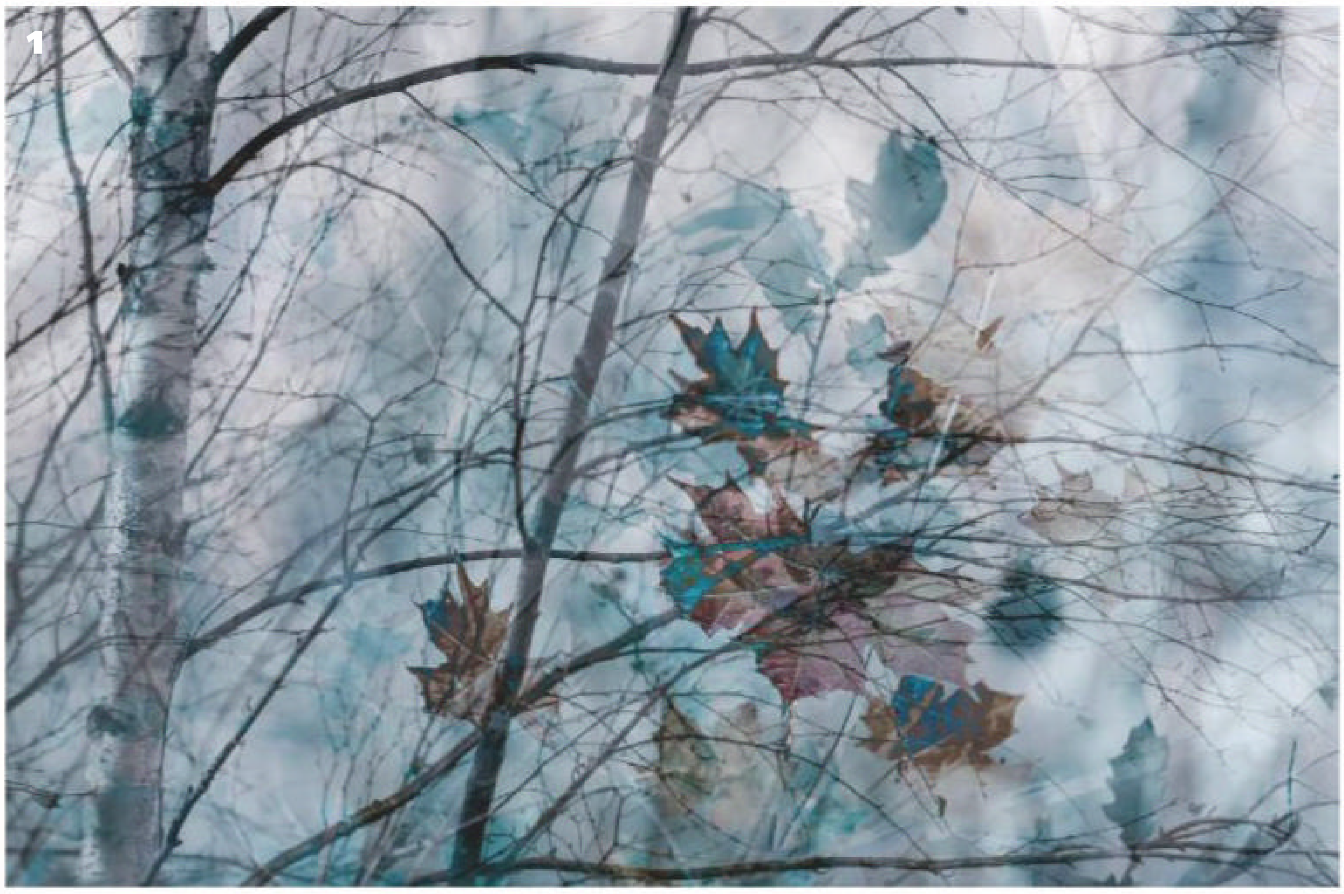
We were getting excited about the EOS-1Ds Mk III in 2008

Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them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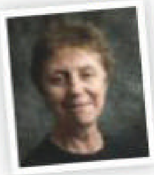
Glenys Garnett, Wakefield



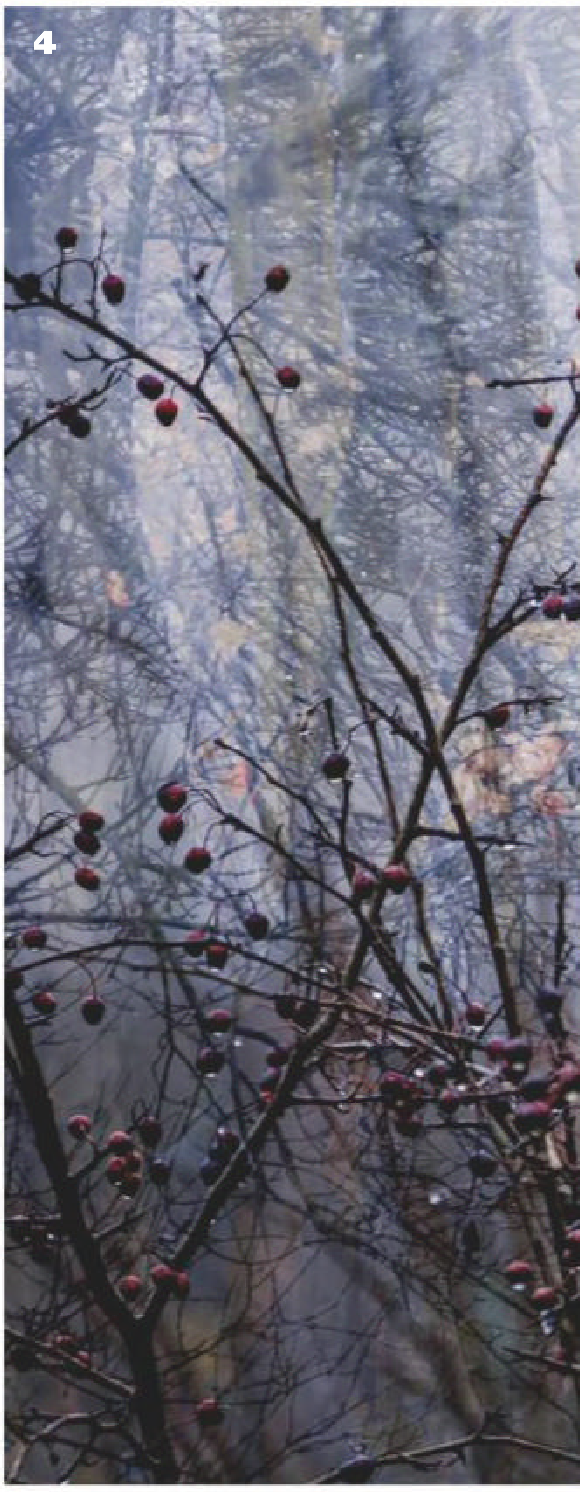
This week's beautiful portfolio of composite work comes from Glenys Garnett, who tells us she has been hooked on photography for over 45 years. Having first started with a simple compact (analogue) camera, she has since progressed through SLRs, DSLRs and more recently, mirrorless cameras. She loves nature and the outdoors – which is evident from the selection of images presented here. She says, 'There is a limitless supply of subjects for me, and I don't need to venture far to find something different in the natural world in my local area.' For more, visit ggcreativeimages.co.uk.

Leaves

1 For this image, Glenys combined two images in-camera, choosing unnatural 'duotone' colours in post-processing for an abstract effect. Fujifilm X-T2, 100-400mm, 1/80sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

Autumn

2 Experimenting with a Lightpad results in this shot having a very 'fine-art' feel to it, with rich autumnal colours. Fujifilm X-T2, 18-55mm, 0.5sec at f/20, ISO 200, tripod, A3 lightpad, lightstand, diffuser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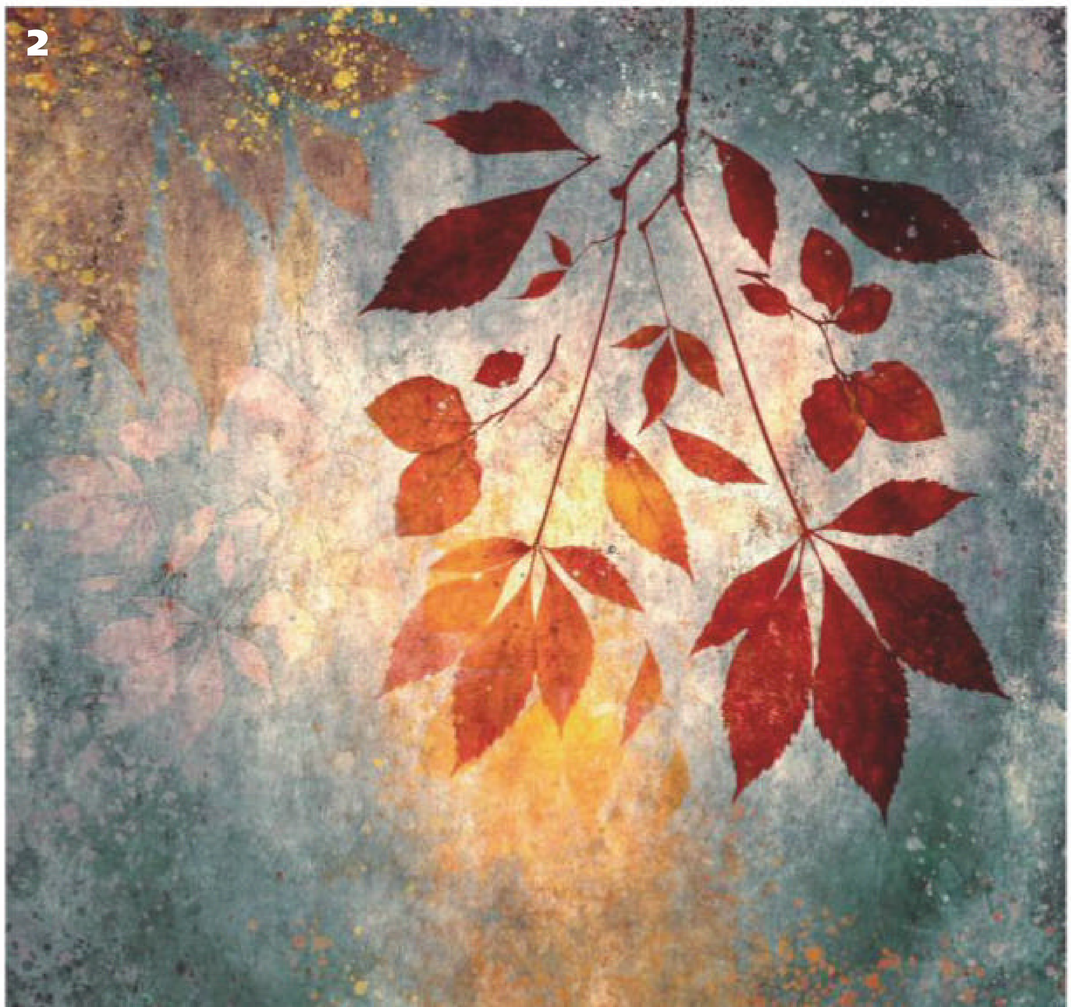
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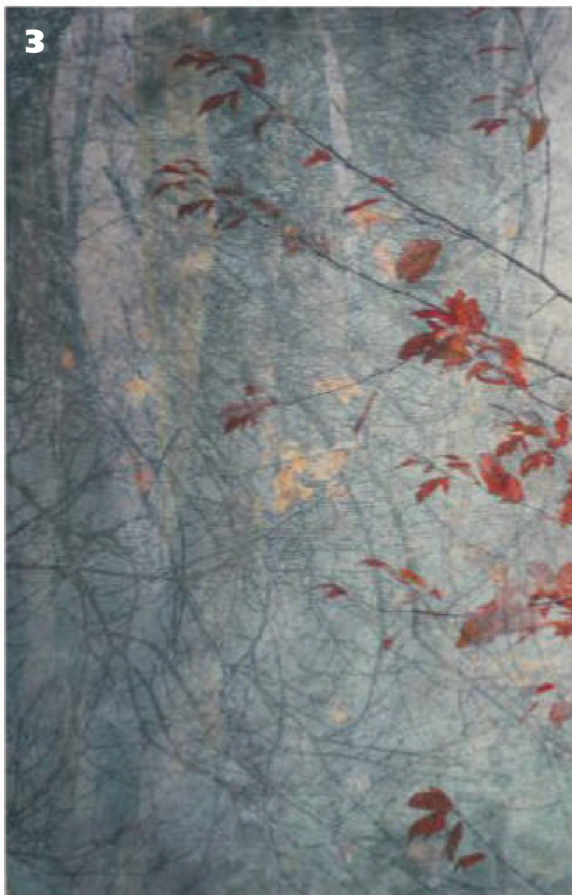
Crigglestone

3 This shot features the same background as image 4 (above right), but with slightly different processing. The image was overlaid using a Multiply layer style and a number of texture layers were added to soften the image and give a more aged and antique feel. Fujifilm X-T2, 55-200mm, 1/60sec at f/4.8, ISO 400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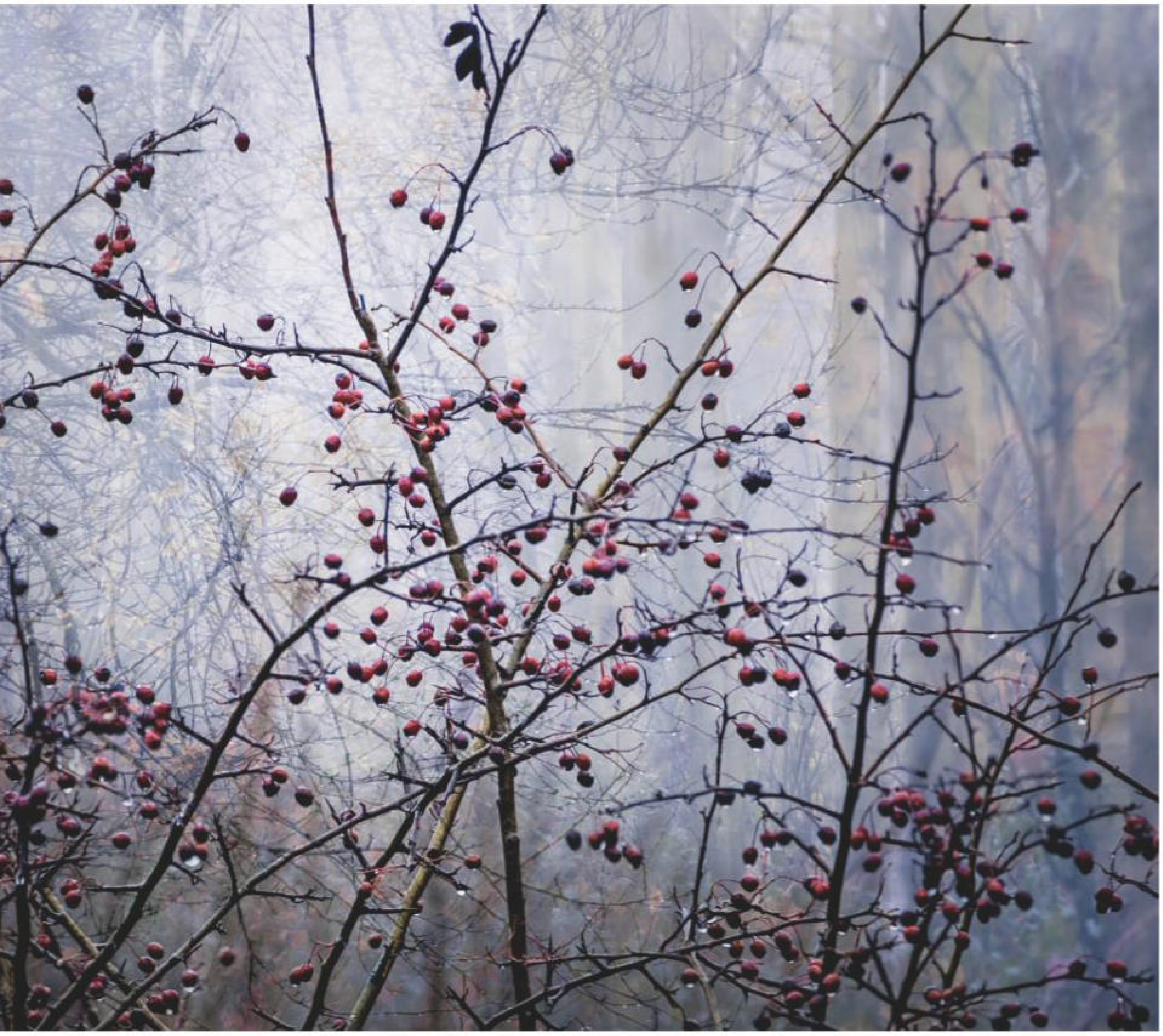
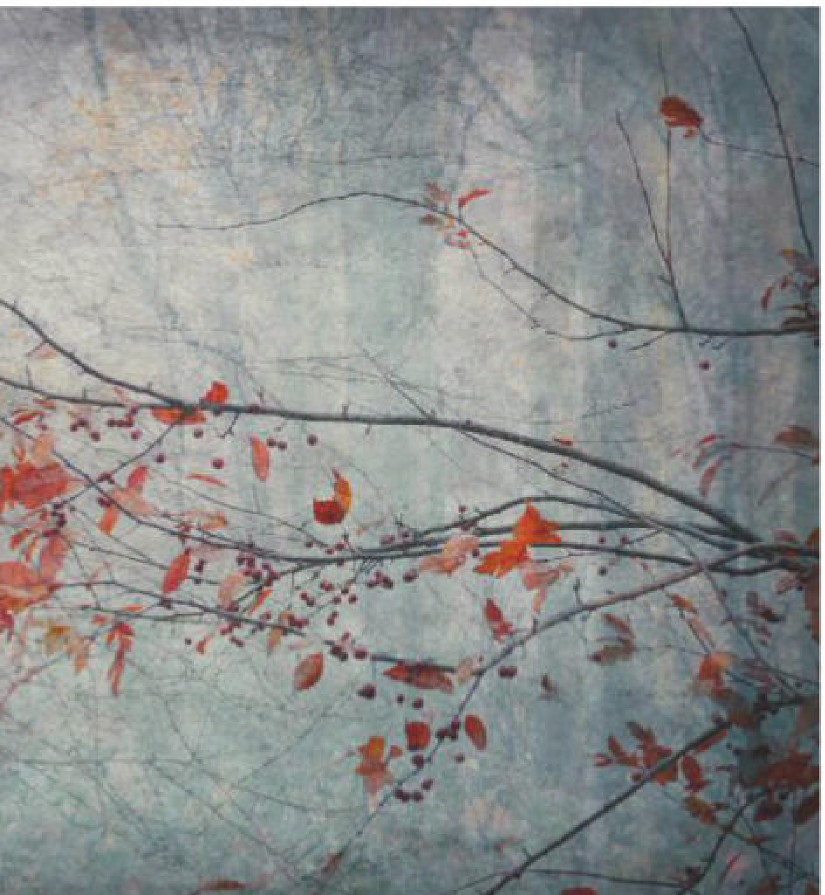
Submit your images
Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/portfolio



Woodland

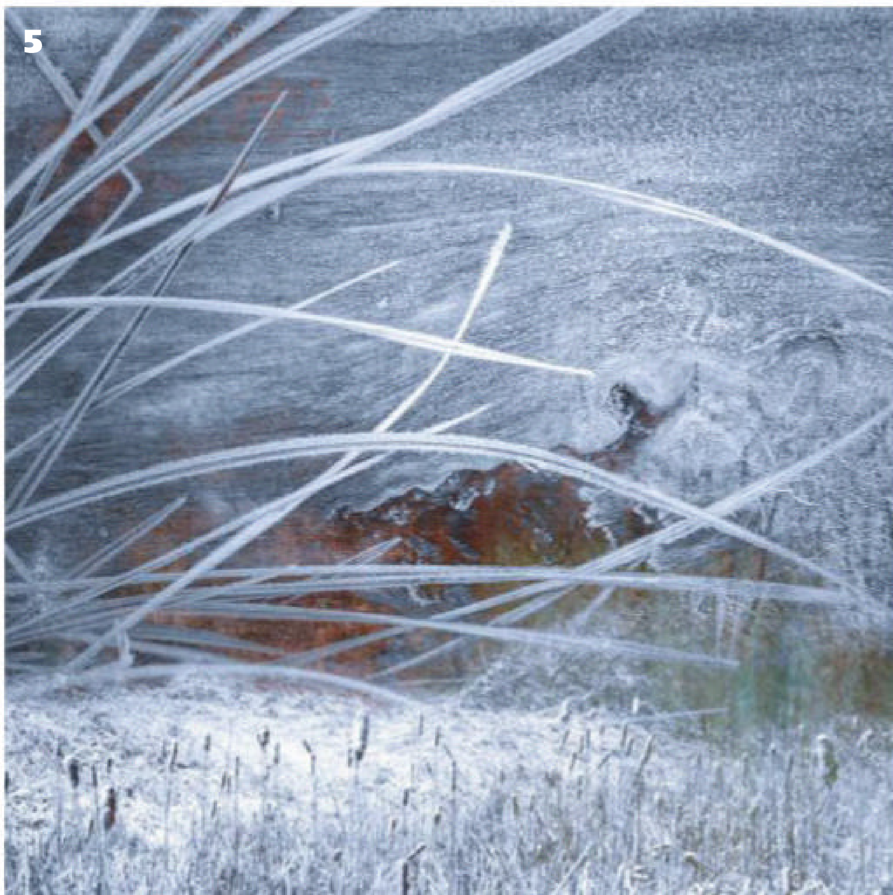
4 Taken on a drizzly November morning, Glenys wanted to emphasise dark dreariness with this composite, while maintaining some depth and lightness in the woodland beyond to give an ethereal effect.The background is two images blended in Photoshop, with a layer overlaid with the Hard Light layer style.
Fujifilm X-T2, 100-400mm, 1/50sec at f/5, ISO 800



Woodpiles

5 This image comes from a series taken in January 2018 in an area of woodland where trees had been felled. On her first visit, a frosty day, Glenys photographed small details. On the second visit – a snowy day – she photographed the wider landscape. This image is a combination of shots from both visits.
Fujifilm X-T2, 55-200mm, 1/80sec at f/7.1, ISO 800

5



KIT LIST

Mirrorless camera ▼

Almost any mirrorless camera can be used with old lenses, regardless of brand or vintage. Full-frame models such as the Sony Alpha 7 II will make the best use of lenses designed for 35mm film, while smaller sensor sizes will introduce field-of-view crops.

Manual lenses ▼

Again, almost any lens can be adapted to any mirrorless camera, but manual-focus optics with built-in aperture rings work best, like these Olympus OM lenses. However if you require autofocus, or electronic aperture setting from the camera body, you'll need a special adapter.

Mount adapters ▼

At their simplest, these are metal tubes with a mount to fit onto the camera body at one end, and another to accept the lens at the other. More complex adapters may include electronics, mechanical aperture control rings, or even focal length-reducing optics.

There's no doubt that the future of photographic technology lies with mirrorless cameras. However, it's not easy for photographers to simply ditch their SLRs and switch to a shiny new mirrorless system. Probably the biggest issue is cost: buying a camera and set of lenses together is prohibitively expensive. The lens ranges can be limited too, especially with Canon and Nikon's new full-frame systems currently offering just a few native options. But this can be alleviated using old manual-focus lenses via mount adapters.

Indeed one of the great attractions of mirrorless can be shooting with these classic lenses. You can buy many lens types much more cheaply, and it's also possible to impart a different character to your images compared to the clinical sharpness of modern optics. Best of all, it's much easier than you might think.

How it works

Adapting lenses works because each camera system has its own flange distance between the lens mount and the sensor or film, and this is much shorter for mirrorless than it is for SLRs. So by bridging the gap with a mount adapter – essentially a metal tube with a body mount at

Classic lenses on mirrorless

Get more from your mirrorless camera by shooting with classic lenses. **Andy Westlake** shows you how, from shooting through to processing your images

Here I shot Beachy Head lighthouse with a 200mm lens that cost just £70
Sony Alpha 7 II, Olympus OM 200mm f/4, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 200

one end, and the new lens mount at the other – it's possible to place lenses at the correct distance from the sensor.

Of course, you still need to be able to focus the lens and change the aperture, and this is easiest with manual-focus lenses that have aperture rings on the lens barrel. The majority of such lenses were designed for use with 35mm film SLRs, so they'll behave as they were originally intended when used on full-frame cameras such as the Sony Alpha 7 series, Canon EOS R, or Nikon Z 6 and Z 7. Cameras with smaller sensors will impose a field-of-view crop, which provides greater telephoto 'reach', but means you'll struggle to get any real wideangle. However there are also a few classic lenses for smaller formats, namely those for Olympus's half-frame PEN system that work well on APS-C cameras, and those for the 1970s Pentax Auto 110 SLR that can be adapted for use on Micro Four Thirds cameras.

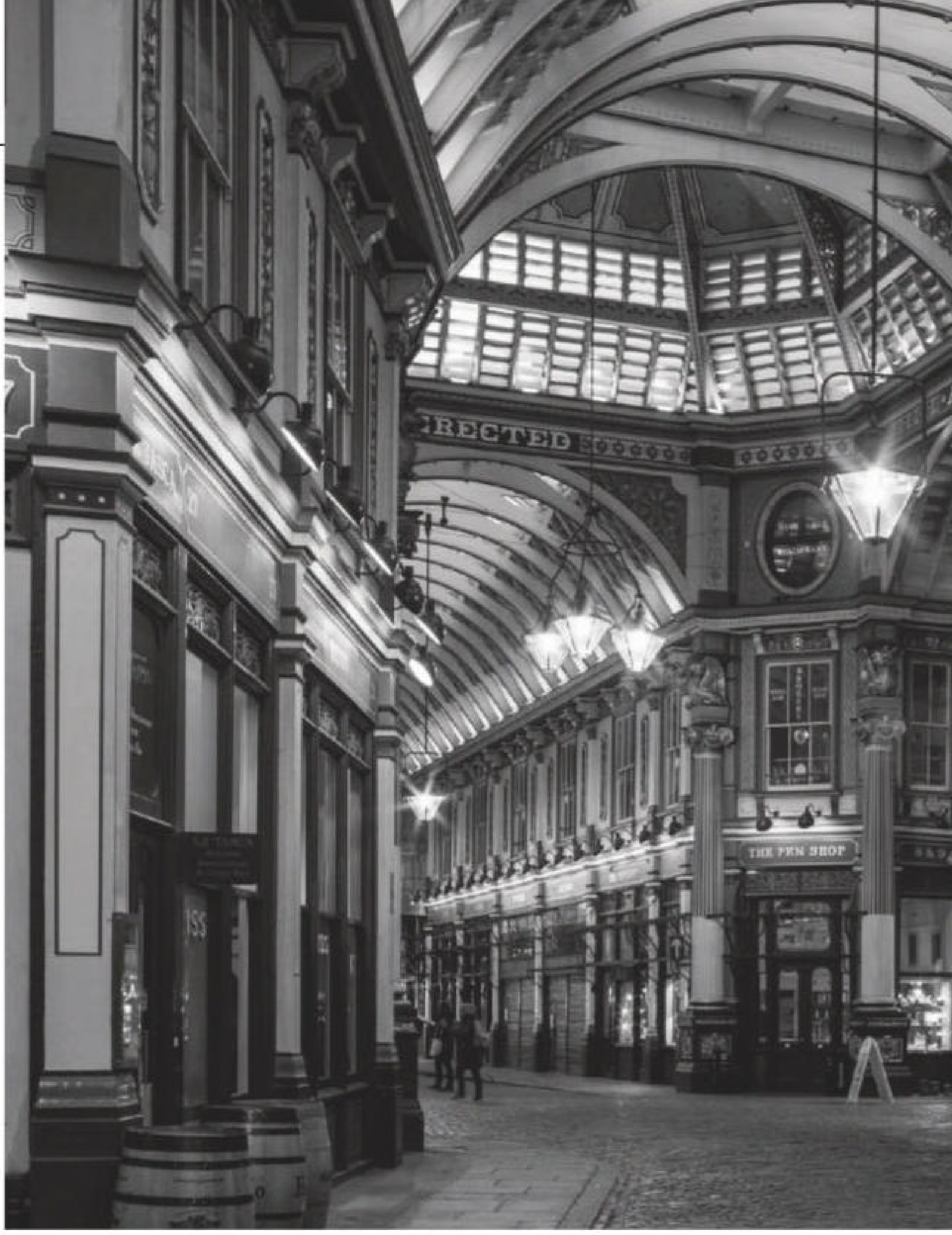
It's also possible to buy electronic adapters that allow modern SLR lenses to be used complete with autofocus, image stabilisation and aperture control from the camera. Working with these is little different to using lenses specifically designed for the camera.

Getting started

If you already own a set of lenses you'd like to use with a mirrorless camera, then all you need to get started is an appropriate adapter. They're available for all the established mirrorless systems with almost any imaginable lens mount; the first adapters for the new Nikon Z and Canon RF mounts are also starting to appear. The popularity of Sony's full-frame cameras means that some particularly innovative adapters have been made in E-mount, and I suspect several of these will be introduced into the Canon and Nikon systems in the not-too-distant future.

As always, it's best to buy adapters from reputable names such as Novoflex, although I've also had good results from more affordable brands including Pixco and Kipon. But really cheap adapters should be avoided, as they can suffer from poorly machined mounts.

If you don't already own any manual lenses, then a vast range can be bought second-hand. As always, buying from a reputable retailer will give you the most confidence in what you're getting – look in the back of AP for some good options. There's also a huge array of lenses available through online marketplaces, but you need to examine descriptions carefully to be sure of what you're getting. I'd recommend picking one lens mount and sticking with it, for example, Canon FD, Minolta MD or Olympus OM. It's possible to acquire many specialist lenses cheaper than you might think – for example, ultra-wideangle, macro, or perspective control optics.



In this image of Leadenhall Market in London, I used a shift lens to control converging verticals
Sony Alpha 7 II, Olympus OM 35mm f/2.8 shift lens, 1/13sec at f/8, ISO 1600

Small manual-focus primes are ideal for unobtrusive candid photography
Sony Alpha 7 II, Olympus 28mm f/3.5, 1/60sec at f/5.6, ISO 5000

Focusing

At the simplest level, you can judge focus by gauging when the image is sharp in the viewfinder, but this isn't particularly accurate. However most cameras provide a couple of focus aids to make life easier.

First is magnified view, which is usually available at several zoom

SIX SPECIAL ADAPTERS

Native adapters

£100-270

Canon, Nikon and Sony all produce adapters for using their SLR-mount lenses on mirrorless models. Aperture setting and optical stabilisation should work as normal, as will autofocus if the lens has a built-in focus motor. However some Nikon- and Sony-mount lenses need to be focused manually.

Sigma MC-11

£199

This allows you to use Canon-mount lenses on Sony E-mount cameras while maintaining electronic aperture control, optical image stabilisation and autofocus. Officially it's fully compatible with Sigma's 'Global Vision' Art, Contemporary or Sports lenses. But in practice, it works with almost any EF-mount lens, although autofocus can be very hesitant with older designs.

Techart Pro LM-EA7

Approx. £400

This clever adapter provides autofocus with almost any manual-focus lens on recent Sony E-mount cameras that use hybrid AF systems. It accepts Leica M-mount lenses directly, but many others can be used via additional adapters. It works best with lenses that are 50mm or wider; with telephotos you'll need to pre-focus approximately first.

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levels, and with the option to place the area of interest over your subject almost anywhere in the frame. This is extremely accurate, but relatively slow to use. It also gets increasingly difficult with longer lenses owing to handshake, especially if your camera doesn't have in-body image stabilisation. Even so it's my preferred method, and I like to assign it to a function button for easy access.

Second is focus peaking, where high-contrast edges of the image are highlighted with a coloured outline. This is much quicker to use than magnified view, but less precise; it's also best suited for lenses that give shallow depth of field, such as telephotos or fast primes. Most cameras offer different strengths, with higher levels suitable for softer, lower-contrast lenses.

Normally, mount adapters work by closing the diaphragm

Ten tips for shooting with manual lenses

1 Release without lens

Many mirrorless cameras won't release the shutter without a native lens mounted, so you'll need to find a menu setting called Release Without Lens (or similar) and set it to Enable.

2 Set up IBIS

For bodies with in-body image stabilisation, you need to set the focal length every time you change lenses. Some allow you to assign this to a custom button for quick access.

3 Set up focusing

Configure your preferred focus aid, either peaking or magnified view, onto a custom button that's easy to press when looking through the viewfinder.

4 Stick with primes

Old zoom lenses tend to have mediocre optical quality, and are awkward to use with in-body stabilisation. In general, primes are a much better bet.

5 Focus wide open

Adapters usually work by stopping the lens down directly to the taking aperture. But it can be easier to get really sharp results by opening up the aperture for focusing.

6 Know your sharpest aperture

Vintage lenses tend to have relatively narrow sweet spots of optimum sharpness, generally a couple of stops down from the maximum aperture.

7 Use a hood

Old lenses are often more prone to flare, so benefit from hoods. Generic screw-in metal or rubber ones are cheap and work fine; they also protect your lens from knocks.

8 Don't use a UV filter

With many older lenses, adding a clear filter brings an increased risk of flare. I only use them when there's a specific need to protect the front element.

9 Exploit ISO

Don't be afraid to raise the ISO in order to get a fast enough shutter speed or small enough aperture. It's better for an image to be grainy than blurred.

10 Shoot raw

You won't get any in-camera lens corrections, so you'll see distortion and chromatic aberration in JPEGs. But these are easily corrected in raw processing.

Laowa Magic Shift Converter

£299

A prime example of out-of-the-box thinking, this is a 1.4x teleconverter that allows wideangle SLR lenses to be used on Sony E-mount cameras, with +/-10mm shift for perspective control purposes. Used with the Laowa 12mm f/2.8 Zero-D, for example, it gives a 17mm f/4 optic. It's a great option for architectural photography.

Tilt adapters

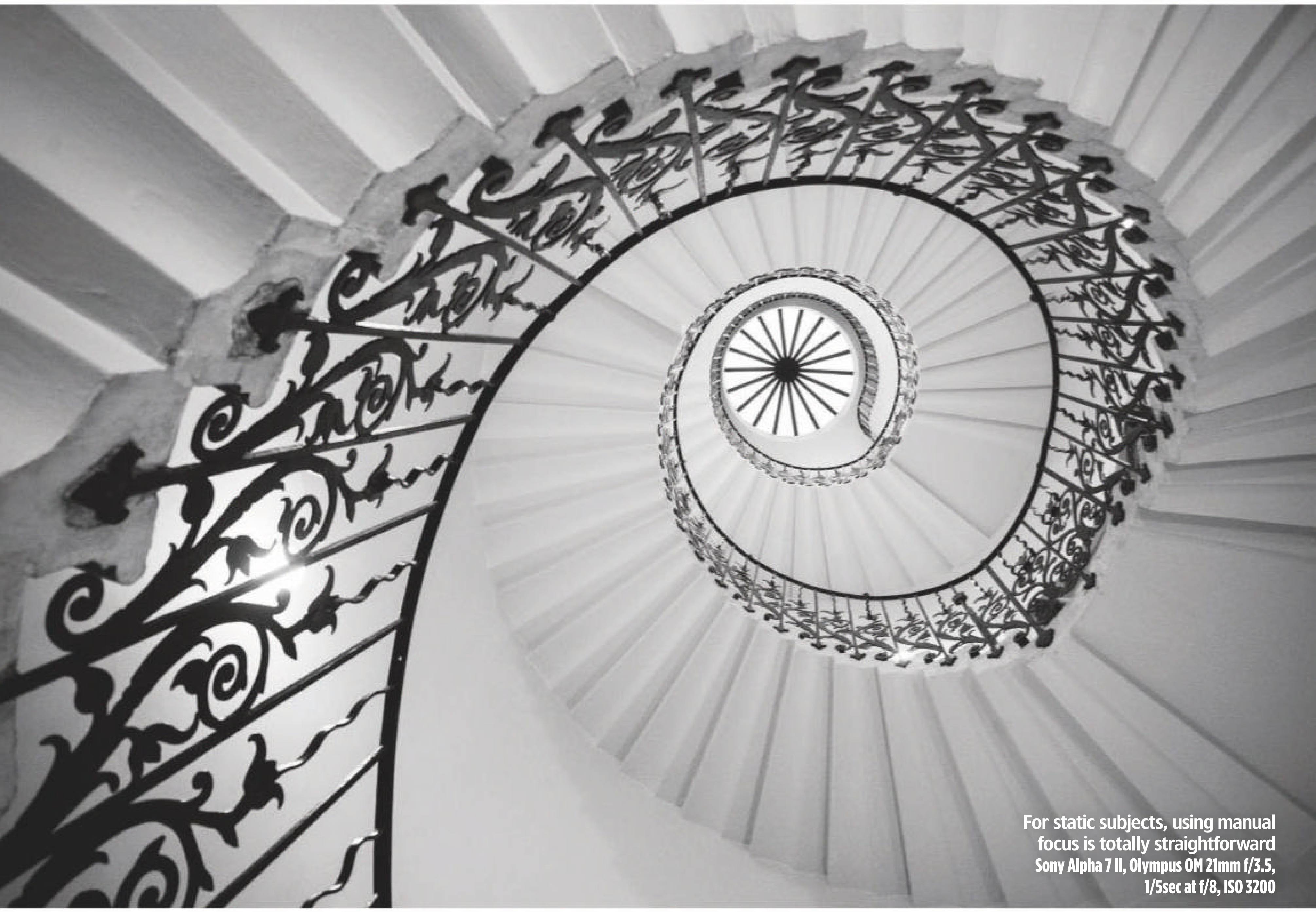
£20-120

If experimenting with focus and depth-of-field is more your thing, then one of these might be just the ticket. By tilting the lens relative to the sensor, you can either gain extended depth of field without having to stop down so far, or achieve selective-focus 'fake miniature' effects. Some have scales indicating the degree of tilt, others are designed to offer free movement.

Speed boosters

£100-500

Also known as focal reducers, these are designed for using full-frame lenses on crop-sensor bodies. They include optics to shorten the focal length of the attached lens by a factor of around 0.7x, while increasing the maximum aperture by a stop. This makes lenses behave similarly on APS-C to how they would on full frame. Some versions even offer electronic aperture control.



For static subjects, using manual focus is totally straightforward
Sony Alpha 7 II, Olympus OM 21mm f/3.5, 1/5sec at f/8, ISO 3200

down directly to what's set on the aperture ring, which means that you get full-time depth-of-field preview. But if you want to place the sharpest focus at a specific point in the image, it can be better to focus at a larger aperture than you're planning on using for shooting. Conversely, sometimes it's easiest to focus fast primes closed down a stop, to cut through the worst of their aberrations.

With no electronic connection to the camera, you won't get any EXIF data in your image files telling you the lens, focal length or aperture used, so you might like to take notes while shooting. If you use a camera with in-body stabilisation, it needs to know the focal length to work correctly, so you'll have to reset this each time you change lenses.

Raw processing

While manual-focus primes are often very sharp, they're not free of all flaws. You're likely to see colour fringing due to chromatic aberration, along with barrel distortion from wideangle lenses and pincushion distortion for telephotos. Fortunately, if you shoot raw these defects are relatively simple to fix. For example, 'Remove Chromatic Aberration' is a single click in the Lens Corrections palette of Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom, and does a fine job of correcting the colour fringing towards the corners of the frame that's usually visible with wideangle lenses. However it won't address the fringing in out-of-focus areas often seen with fast primes or telephotos, which requires experimentation with the 'defringe' controls.

Distortion is usually corrected using a simple slider in the raw processor. It's a fixed optical characteristic of each lens, so you only need to work out a correction value once, then apply it again whenever you use the same lens. It's usually only necessary to correct if you have straight lines along the frame edges, anyway.

Overall, with careful focusing, shooting and raw processing, you should be able to get excellent image quality from classic manual-focus lenses, for a fraction of the price of brand-new optics. AP

Why it works

I SHOT the elegant Tulip staircase at the Queen's House in Greenwich (above) using a 1970s-vintage Olympus OM Zuiko 21mm f/3.5 wideangle prime on my Sony Alpha 7 II. This tiny lens weighs just 185g, accepts 49mm filters, and can be bought for under £250, making it considerably more affordable than any native E-mount wideangle. Like most classic primes it's not super-sharp wide open, but it gives excellent results around f/8 to f/11.

While this image gives an impression of brightness and airiness, it was in fact shot in very low light on a dull winter's day. This isn't a location where you can set up a tripod, so I had to use every trick available to get the shot, combining careful focusing and aperture selection to achieve the desired depth-of-field, with high ISO and in-body image stabilisation to avoid blur from camera movement.

The compact Olympus OM 21mm f/3.5 wideangle is a good match for the Sony Alpha 7 II

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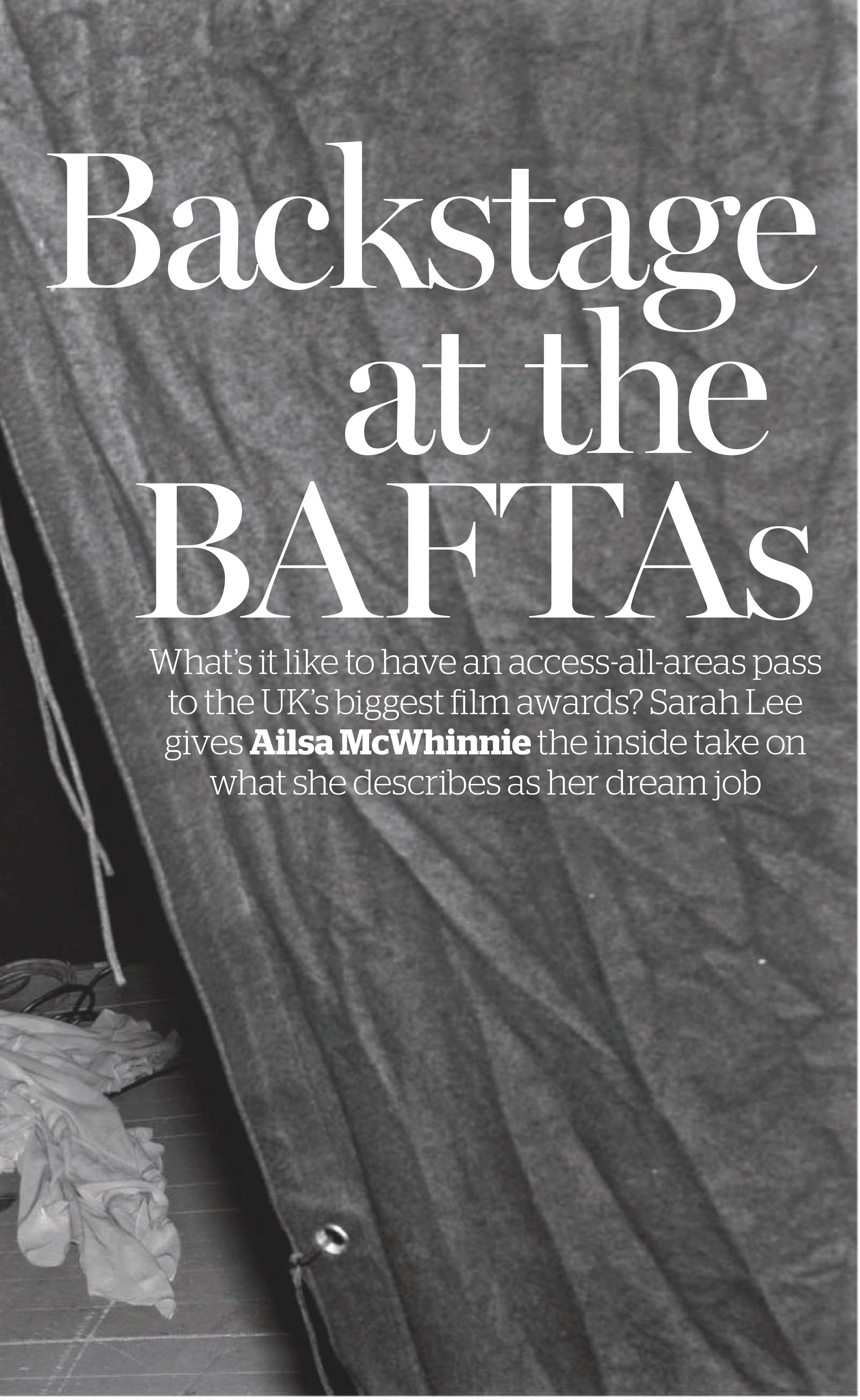
Above: Léa Seydoux prepares for her official portrait

Left: Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette take a selfie before the event begins

Right: A nervous Maisie Williams practises her lines before presenting an award

ALL IMAGES © SARAH LEE FOR BAFTA



Backstage at the BAFTAs

What's it like to have an access-all-areas pass to the UK's biggest film awards? Sarah Lee gives **Ailsa McWhinnie** the inside take on what she describes as her dream job

'I do a lot of stalking and waiting for people to move into the light'

On the morning of Monday 11 February, London will play host to some very sore heads indeed. The great, good and glamorous of the film world will have been up all night, celebrating their successes or drowning their sorrows after the annual EE British Academy Film Awards (the BAFTAs, to you and me). Among them, likely to be looking a shell of the woman she was 24 hours earlier, will be Sarah Lee. But the hollow eyes and exhausted gait won't be a result of over-indulging on the finest champagne. It'll be because she'll have spent the afternoon, evening and night photographing the event, and then – while others were calling their taxis – editing and processing, before finally delivering a selection of images to the offices of *The Guardian*.

She first covered the event five years ago, and is one of only a handful of photographers with an access-all-areas pass. This allows her to capture the chaos of the red carpet without fear of being moved along by security, she can head for the auditorium as everyone takes their seats, and then she can wander freely backstage, her keen eye seeking out moments that, when captured, form a visual record of the night. 'It's a brilliant, dream job,' Sarah enthuses.

How did her career lead to this point? It started on her 18th birthday, when her father gave her a second-hand Pentax K1000 (when what she'd really wanted was a nifty little Olympus XA). She quickly discovered that taking pictures was something she was good at, so, on heading to University College London (UCL) to study English, she tried to join the photography society. 'It was completely masculine and run by the medics,' she recalls. 'It was a real closed shop, and they made it really hard to get anywhere near their darkroom.'

Fortunately, someone suggested she join the student newspaper – which had the added bonus of supplying film, paper and chemicals for free. 'The picture editor at the time was Abbie Trayler-Smith [now a respected portrait and documentary photographer],' Sarah says. 'She asked to see my portfolio, but I didn't have one. She then asked for my contact sheets – and I had to ask what a contact sheet was!'

Abbie wasn't put off, however, and sent Sarah off to photograph a rat convention. 'It was the most exciting thing ever when the picture was printed, and basically I ended up doing two degrees – my English degree, with the rest of the time spent working for the student newspaper,' she explains.

Job offer

The next step is enough to make any aspiring editorial photographer gnash their teeth with envy. Despite coming second in the Guardian Student Media Photography Awards, Sarah still didn't view photography as a potential career. But, as a result of her

success, Eamonn McCabe, then picture editor of *The Guardian*, asked to see more of her pictures. She went to the newspaper's offices, he looked at her portfolio and said, 'Why don't you start on Tuesday as a trainee for two days a week?'

As Sarah says, 'I wasn't even looking to be a photographer, and I got offered a job at *The Guardian*. I'm aware how sickening that sounds! But things were really different then. I got paid, it was enough to live on and I didn't have masses of student debt. It wouldn't happen now.'

She hasn't looked back since and now, 20 years on, still works for *The Guardian* three days a week, as well as shooting other commercial work. And if you follow Sarah on Instagram (@sarahmlee47), you'll know that her camera is basically an extension of her arm. She's never without it, she's prolific, and she photographs her life in a warm, intimate and nuanced way. She credits part of her success to the fact that, several years ago, she ditched the DSLRs and swapped wholesale to the Leica system. Now an ambassador for the brand, she never uses anything else – and is adamant it has changed the type of work she does and the commissions she gets. Her ability to afford the switch to the iconic German brand was thanks to an enormous commission for the band Coldplay, in which she shot the entire campaign – CD, billboards, iTunes, the lot – for the album *Mylo Xyloto*. 'I got a Leica ME, plus a 50mm and a 35mm lens, thinking it was an indulgence, but I really fell in love with it,' she says. 'Within a couple of months, it was all I was using on jobs and I was getting better commissions. Even though the Leica's quality wasn't as good as my Nikon DSLR, I didn't have zoom lenses, and it wasn't as good in low light, somehow I was making it work. I got another one, and within six months, I'd sold my DSLRs and I haven't picked one up since.'

What the change of camera system did was remind her of the sheer joy of taking and sharing images, and this was reflected in her work. She is confident it led directly to the commission from BAFTA that has now become such a highlight of her year. In painting a picture of the day, she describes an event that is high-octane, challenging and incredibly satisfying. And it all starts on the freneticism of the red carpet.

'There is a hierarchy on the red carpet,' she explains, 'so the most famous people tend to arrive last. It's like a power move on their part. Suddenly, they all appear, there will be screaming from the crowd and it's such a crush. It's like an incredibly genteel prison riot – and I'll be trying to shoot it in manual focus. It's important not to get in the other photographers' way, too. They're a really nice team, and everyone is respectful of each other.'

Top left: *Star Wars* actress Daisy Ridley throws herself into the action on the red carpet

Above left: Idris Elba and Tom Hiddleston play fight over the James Bond rumours

Sarah Lee has been shooting editorial portraits for *The Guardian* for 20 years. She has also shot campaigns for Coldplay and Visa, and is working on a long-term project on Sunset Boulevard. She has been photographing the BAFTA awards for five years and is an official ambassador for Leica. Visit **www.sarahmlee.com**.

The madding crowd

Whereas most of us would probably do our best to tune out of the crowd, Sarah enjoys it, as it feeds into her desire to photograph interactions between people. 'It's as if the crowd needs benediction by touching and being photographed with the celebrity,' she says. 'I find that really interesting. It's as if they're saying, "I, too, was here."'

However, it's when the time comes to head for the auditorium that things heat up – literally. 'We have to wear black tie – and black tie isn't warm, so I put on thermals underneath for the red carpet. It's this double-bind of awfulness, because then you're boiling when you're inside, and there's no chance of finding 20 minutes to go to a loo and unhook yourself.'

So it is that she finds herself inside the auditorium, where only she and

one other photographer from the BAFTA team are permitted. It's her favourite part of the proceedings. 'Nobody takes their seats,' she explains, 'so they're all standing around chatting. It's like a school trip. They've kind of forgotten by then that there are photographers around, so it's a bit less guarded.'

One of the biggest challenges of the night is getting a shot of the whole auditorium with the audience in their seats – because everyone only sits down when the announcement is made that the event will be live in 20 seconds. 'To get people in their seats looking at the stage means I have to stand there doing a Hail Mary over my head with the camera,' she describes. She has a split second to take the shot before scuttling off the stage in order not to be caught on camera (we'll draw a veil over the time she ended up running straight at the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, accompanied by the chair of BAFTA, as they were being shown to their seats...).

The rest of the evening is spent backstage, which is particularly tricky because it's so dark. 'I do a lot of stalking and waiting for people to move into the light,' she explains. 'I shoot on a Leica M10, which is pretty good in low light and is fine at ISO 3200. And Leica often lends me a Monochrom, which is fine at ISO 6000.' Lens-wise, she uses a 50mm f/1.4 for the vast majority of the night, with a 28mm and 35mm as alternatives.

Given that 99% of her work is colour, why does she choose to cover the BAFTAs in black & white? 'Awards ceremonies are quite unappealing, colour-wise,' she explains. 'There's so much visual noise – TV crews, cables, branding, and hundreds of other guests who aren't well known. Everyone's clothes clash and there's a lot going on. I wanted to get a sense of intimacy and character, and private moments at a public event. To do that, I had to strip away a lot of the visual noise. Also, shooting in black & white gives a nod to old Hollywood. You have incredibly attractive people, brimming with charisma and dressed to the nines in couture. It's pretty amazing.'

However, the glamour is one-sided. For Sarah, she finishes the evening with what she graphically describes as 'bleeding nubs' for feet, and only once the Great Gatsby-esque dinner at the Grosvenor House hotel is over can she think of starting to edit and convert her images. And because *The Guardian* needs the images by 8am, she has no choice but to stay up all night. 'By the time I deliver my images, I look like a vampire corpse,' she laughs. 'Then, by lunchtime, I'm out and fast asleep.'

So if you happen to watch the red carpet build-up to the BAFTAs this year, look out for a woman with a shock of blonde hair, wielding a Leica, and capturing split seconds of quietness, character and warmth among the chaos.

Above: Members of the audience, seconds before the broadcast goes live, in the Royal Opera House

Below left: Actor Matthew Goode takes a quiet moment backstage

Below right: Leonardo DiCaprio chuckles at Sarah as she stumbles backwards to get her shot

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Airborne with the Cargopilot

Christiaan van Heijst captures incredible images doing his day (and night) job. **Robin Evans** goes aboard

‘The last six months have been absolutely crazy’, confesses Christiaan from Chicago, who has recently landed from Baku, Azerbaijan. ‘My camera has seen it all: six continents, the Milky Way, oceans, deserts covered in clear silver moonlight, and weather systems that make the jaw drop.’ He’s a passionate advocate of life aloft, with photography maintaining his love of flight despite its unpredictable nature, long hours and pressures on the body’s rhythms. ‘Seeing thunderstorms firing up through a starry night high up in the atmosphere is something that still impresses,’ he says.

His world is air cargo, the hidden artery that runs the globe. As much a commodity as affordable, dependable air travel, it’s easy to take both for granted, disconnected from their complexities. His portfolio restores the awe and wonder of both flight and what he calls ‘our little blue marble’.

His work was launched into the public eye in August 2014 when he captured strange lights glowing under the Pacific Ocean; on landing, these surreal shots went viral around the world. This event, still without formal explanation, is discussed in a chapter of his debut, heavyweight book *Cargopilot*, published in 2016. ‘I showed a tour guide some pictures and they later contacted me suggesting it was cool stuff for a book,’ he says. Setting to work, he was spurred on by the opinion of a contact in publishing, who said: ‘I don’t even like aviation but these are amazing.’

As a combination, photography and flight were bound together above the battlefields of World War One; *Cargopilot* illustrates this pairing a century on. His diverse portfolio includes monochrome aircraft form and unusual aircraft encountered worldwide. A particular specialism is the flight

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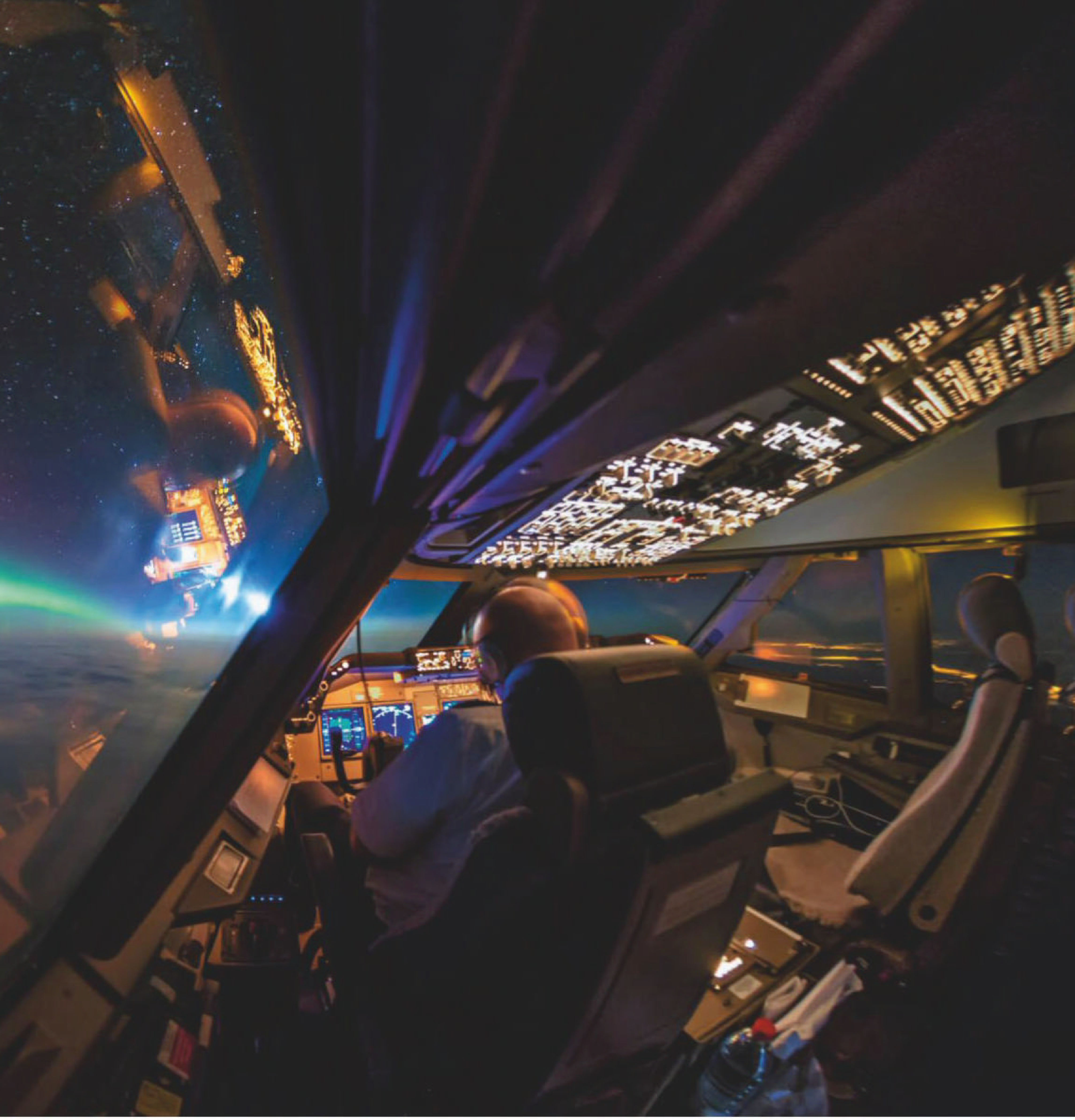


All pilots treasure their unique perspective of a natural light show
Nikon D800, 10.5mm, 5sec at f/2.8, ISO 4000

deck panorama, lit by the Northern Lights (*het noorderlicht* in his native Dutch), tropical thunderstorms or flight-deck instruments. His lens offers a way around restricted access to the flight deck. 'Compliments from colleagues made me realise there are simply not many pilots able to articulate what our environment really looks like,' he explains.

Unique perspective

'The thin atmosphere offers a different palette of colours; then the curvature of the earth and lofty position permit a horizon much further beyond the usual,' says Christiaan. 'As the sun dips below the horizon, the earth itself casts a shadow back up into the atmosphere called the terminator.'

Flying Luxembourg–Los Angeles, he describes the Greenland sunset elongated by the westbound flight: 'At one point I thought we were above a thick layer of cloud, until a crevice below made me realise it was pristine ice stretching as far as I could see. Deprived of references it is sometimes hard to tell. It almost makes me feel like I'm an astronaut, first setting eyes on a newly discovered planet.'

Despite its beauty, the atmosphere is a harsh environment; the aircraft becomes more than a workplace, part of the deeper connection pilots have with their skies. He also writes poetically, comments like 'The thinnest, briefest sliver of turquoise that heralds the breach of a new day' evoking influences of astronomy. 'The Apollo astronauts documented literally unique images, conveying emotions and sights no other human had ever seen before,' says Christiaan.

It was Buzz Aldrin who once opined: 'We need to have people up there who can communicate what it feels like – not just pilots and engineers.' For Christiaan this defines his mission: 'I'm the link between the typical analytical pilot mindset and an artist of words and images conveying their impressions from above.' He laughs: 'Space would be the ultimate platform, but I'm the middle generation. For now, we go up to 45,000 feet but you can still soak up some supernatural views.'

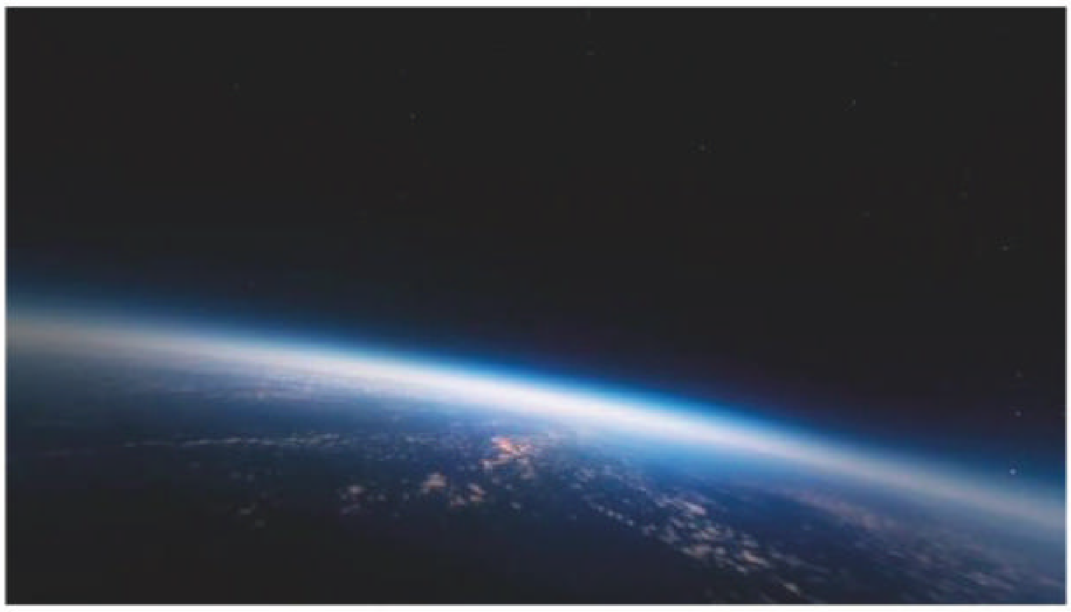
Career duality

Of his twin careers, both progressing through three advancing models, he notes: 'It's difficult to say which came first, they have become hard to distinguish.' Starting as many do, by gliding, he kept a camera to hand. Flight training is an expensive, arduous two-year qualification without guarantee of a job. Aged 20, he landed his first job flying rugged contracts abroad. 'I was taken by surprise what it was like from the air, so I kept clicking,' he recalls. Depicted in *Cargopilot* is a surprising example: the 1,500-year-old standing Buddhas of Bamiyan in the Afghanistani Hindu Kush. Hewn into a sandstone cliff, these were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. Appropriately, the site lies on the Silk Route – our modern version of which he now serves by air.

Returning to European short-haul attuned his appreciation of the night: 'I became more and more interested in capturing the next challenge: city lights of the sleeping world, moonlight on the snow-covered Alps below and constellations above – simply unique from a pilot's perspective.' His acquisition of a fisheye lens, despite its cost and otherwise limited potential, also helped: 'F/2.8 suddenly made my D80 usable in the low ambient light of the darkened flight deck.' He notes: 'With loans paid off I could make headway professionally' – his accumulated hours brought him to the iconic Boeing 747 'jumbo'.

Creativity is a good foil to the inflexible, procedure-driven world of flight; his photography is entirely self-taught. 'It took ten years of practice, failures, experimenting and even more failures to master the techniques,' he says. Despite the obvious differences, the end product is identical: 'After this amount of time I instinctively know it blind, what it does and how to use it.'

Left: The light trails of another aircraft dodging a huge equatorial thunderstorm over Africa.
Nikon D800, 10.5mm, 25sec at f/2.8, ISO 400



Left: The curve of the earth is clearly visible from a high altitude cruise over the Atlantic.
Nikon D850, 14-24mm, 2sec at f/2.8, ISO 1250

Right: Other aircraft frequently pass in opposing directions separated by 1,000 feet
Nikon D800, 10.5mm, 1/5000sec at f/4.5, ISO 1000

Office of extremes

Atop the jumbo's distinctive hump, the flight deck is an office of extremes. The heart of a vast 76m long fuselage and 68m wingspan, it's surprisingly compact with expansive and constantly changing views. The large, panoramic windscreens are polarised against harsh light, so incompatible with polarising filters. In heavy weather or by night, the darkness is intense, the world retreating to this tiny space. On clear nights, it becomes a perfect astronomical panorama, framing the unusual working environment.

The lengthy, low-workload cruise is good for photography; airspace rules require heavy use of automation. Flights have a minimum crew of two, augmented with more for lengthy sectors. Each crew might visit Hong Kong, Nairobi, Anchorage and Caracas, potentially all within long working blocks that unfold spontaneously. 'We pack for three weeks, hot and cold,' Christiaan says, including a selection of gear honed for portability.

'I see routes on my roster and track the [Northern Lights] forecast activity,' he says. 'Depending on the strength, I use 1 second during a bright show or up to 10 if it's weak.

Above: Another sleeping city, unaware of the trade being plied constantly above
Nikon D800, 10.5mm, 1/8sec at f/2.8, ISO 6400

Christiaan's gear

Nikon D850

Christiaan now has the latest class-leading full-frame model from Nikon.

Nikkor 10.5mm f/2.8 fisheye

'Even though this is a DX lens I love the sharpness, speed and reliability – ideal for long exposures and always at hand.'

Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8

'One of the very best wideangles that Nikon offers; perfect for long-exposures and other shots, by day and night.'

Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8

'Relatively heavy but perfect for daylight and air-to-air shots.'

Boeing 747-8F

The latest freighter version of the intercontinental cruiser.

ISO is the same story; as low as possible. Of course, it's not always possible to plan everything exactly – the key is spontaneity: 'Sometimes the forecast would be off or our departure delayed; the possibilities are limited to whatever passes the window.' There are alternatives: 'On one occasion my schedule was from Luxembourg to Johannesburg, the length of Africa right through the night. That produced a shot of the Milky Way core over the Congo.'

Techniques

Tripods are impractical in the flight deck or carted through airport security. Instead, he braces the body above the instrument coaming or against the window: 'In a small space the fisheye proves a winner; 12 years on she's always close at hand.' He adds: 'F/2.8 and the rest is up to the conditions – not the sweet spot of any lens but my only concern is getting as much light as possible in the shortest time.'

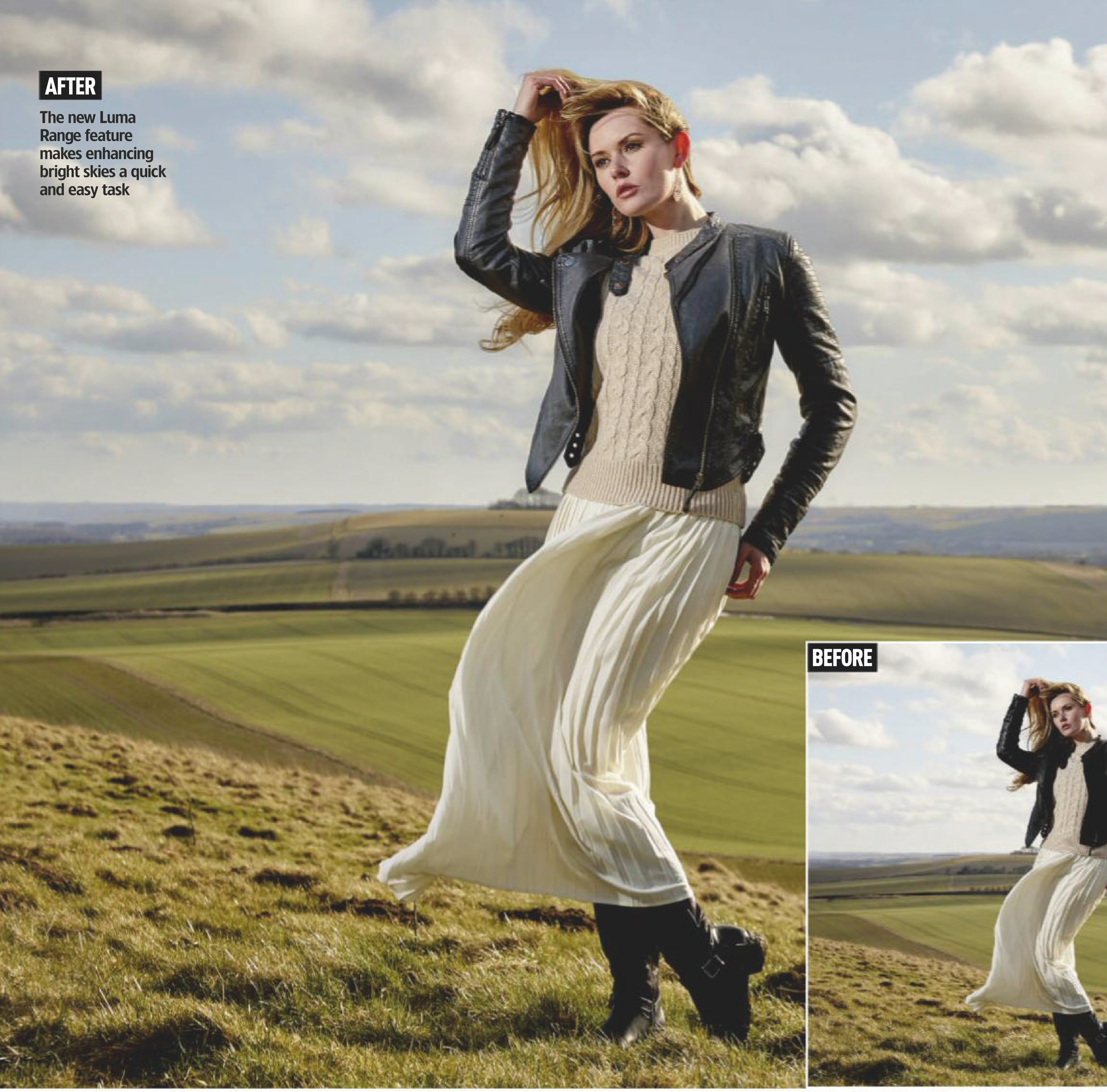
Turbulence can be a nuisance, sometimes offset by the 400 tonne mass and use of a wideangle lens. Christiaan confesses to having missed plenty of Northern Lights; nature's way of keeping some views back. He mitigates his other threat, window reflections, by keeping the lens close to the glass and the ambient lighting low. These techniques apply equally in the cabin: 'Block the camera body between seat and window, or press it against the window to keep it still. To reduce reflections and ambient light, use a blanket or try to cover as much of the area around the window as possible.'

Christiaan van Heijst describes himself as 'a 747 cargo pilot, fine art photographer and admirer of natural light'. He documents this unique viewpoint to show how graceful the world is. See his Instagram @JPCvanHeijst. His work is also available as a book, calendar and prints from **jpcvanheijst.com**.

Future flights

Christiaan publishes his photographs firstly as initial web content from the road; full processing waits for his home set-up. He has recently launched a calendar and fine-art prints. 'Such unique images demand a unique treatment,' he affirms. His latest project will document the history of the 747; this 20th-century icon first flew in February 1969. Airborne exactly 50 years, it will continue as a mainstay of our materialistic world for a long time yet. 'Its opening nose-door allows outsize cargo, a purpose it was initially designed for,' says Christiaan.

He highlights the reliability and durability of both machines: 'Aviation has its two big players [Boeing and Airbus] and it's the same with cameras'. Despite various advances, tried-and-tested wins for Christiaan who chuckles: 'I stick to my Nikon and I'm a typical Boeing guy: very conservative.'



AFTER

The new Luma Range feature makes enhancing bright skies a quick and easy task

BEFORE

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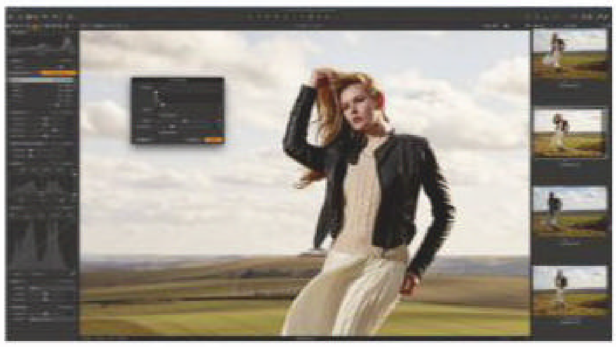
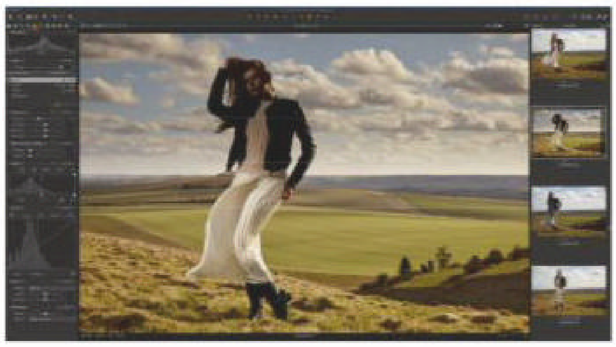


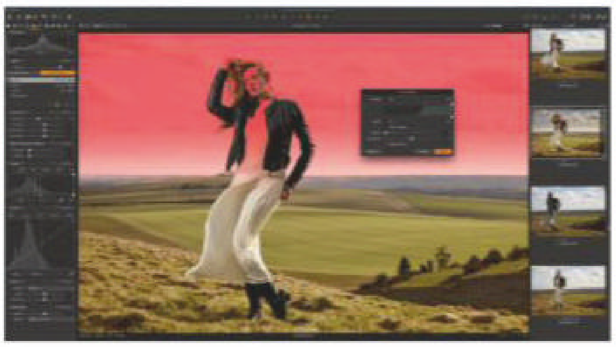
1 Target a range

The new Luma Range control lets you target a specific portion of the tonal range in order to make adjustments to it. Here, for example, the subject's jacket is initially very underexposed. But by lightening the entire image then using Luma Range to restrict the effect to the darker tones, we can lift the area with ease.



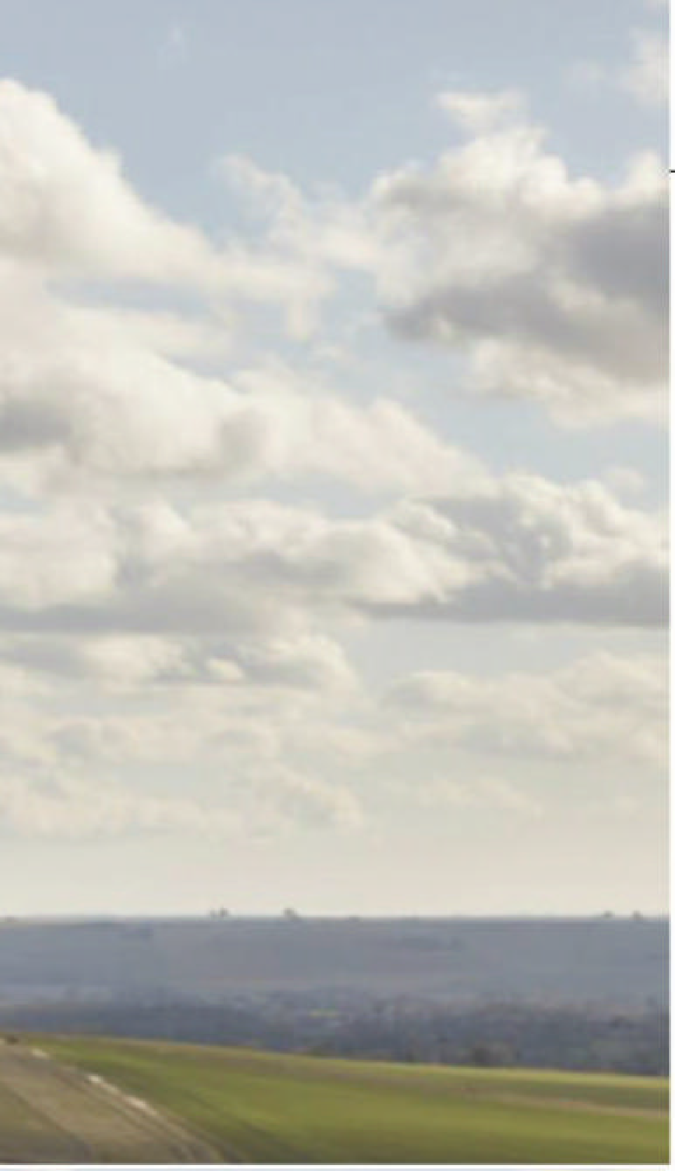
2 Use with gradient tools

As well as using Luma Range on universal adjustments, we can also apply it to selective adjustments made, using any of the masking tools in Capture One, like the Linear Gradient tool. Here the plan is to reveal more detail in the blown-out sky, so we've initially drawn a gradient then dialled in negative exposure.



3 Control the fall-off

The gradient leaves our subject very dark, so we enter Luma Range. The black and white points in the box will let us determine the range and set a fall-off for a smoother transition. We've restricted the effect to the highlights by moving the black points inwards, so that the adjustment only affects the bright sky.



ALL PICTURES ©JAMES PATERSON

James Paterson
James is as skilled a photo editor as he is a photographer. His work has appeared in countless magazines and books, and in 2014 he was appointed editor of *Practical Photoshop* magazine. His subjects range from portraits to landscapes, and architecture. For James, Photoshop is more than just a work tool. Visit **www.patersonphotos.com**

One love

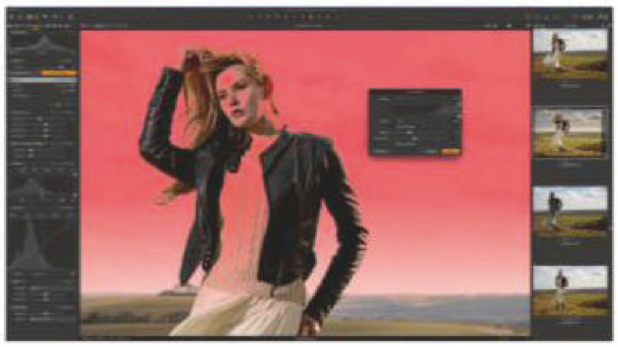
The esteemed raw editor, Capture One, just keeps getting better. The new Luma Range feature has a local adjustment tool to rival any in Lightroom

Capture One has a reputation as one of the best raw editors available, and now with the release of version 12 there are several new developments that further enhance the package. Rivalling other top editors like Lightroom and DxO PhotoLab, Capture One 12 offers a combination of powerful raw-processing and image-organising tools. As you'd expect from the makers of the high-end Phase One camera system, Capture One is the preferred choice for lots of pro photographers, as the advanced workflow and tethering features mean it's ideally suited for studio set-ups. But it's not just pros who can reap the benefits; many enthusiasts will also find much to like in Capture One – from its slick tonal controls to powerful layer and masking features.

Version 12 introduces a range of clever new tools, including a Radial Gradient tool. But the new standout feature is Luma Range, which makes it quick and easy to zero in on areas of an image based on their luminosity values, in order to make precise adjustments to them. It's an ideal feature, whether you want to enhance a sky, boost skin tones, balance out an exposure or selectively alter any part of a photograph.

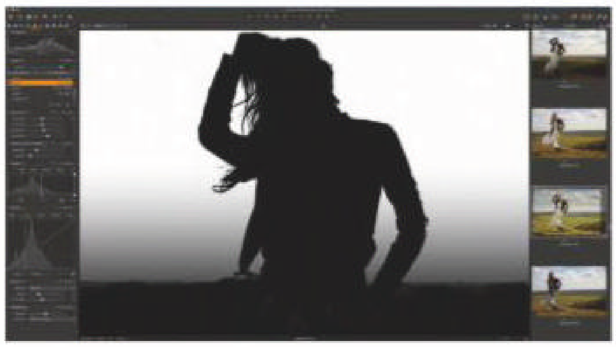
Fresh look

One of the criticisms sometimes directed towards Capture One in the past has been the steep learning curve. As such, experienced users will immediately notice the new-look, beginner-friendly interface. Version 12 has been made to look more contemporary and accessible with new iconography, text and slider design. For more advanced users the interface is more customisable than ever, and there's also a new keyboard shortcut manager with a helpful search feature. Capture One has always been kind to those who love their shortcuts, and the new tweaks make it easier to set up shortcuts for almost anything you like.



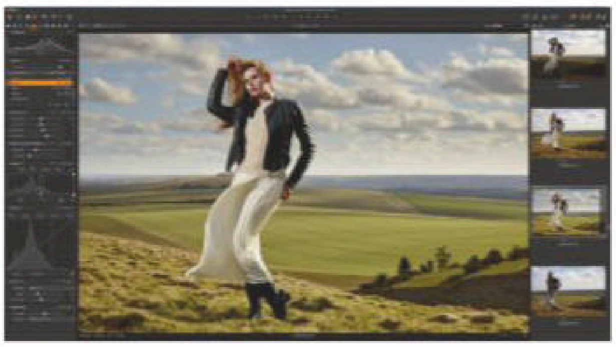
4 Adjust the sensitivity

The Radius and Sensitivity sliders in the Luma Range settings further help us to define our mask. These let us soften the edges of the mask and fine-tune what's included or not. In this example, it improves the precision along the edge, giving us better subject isolation.



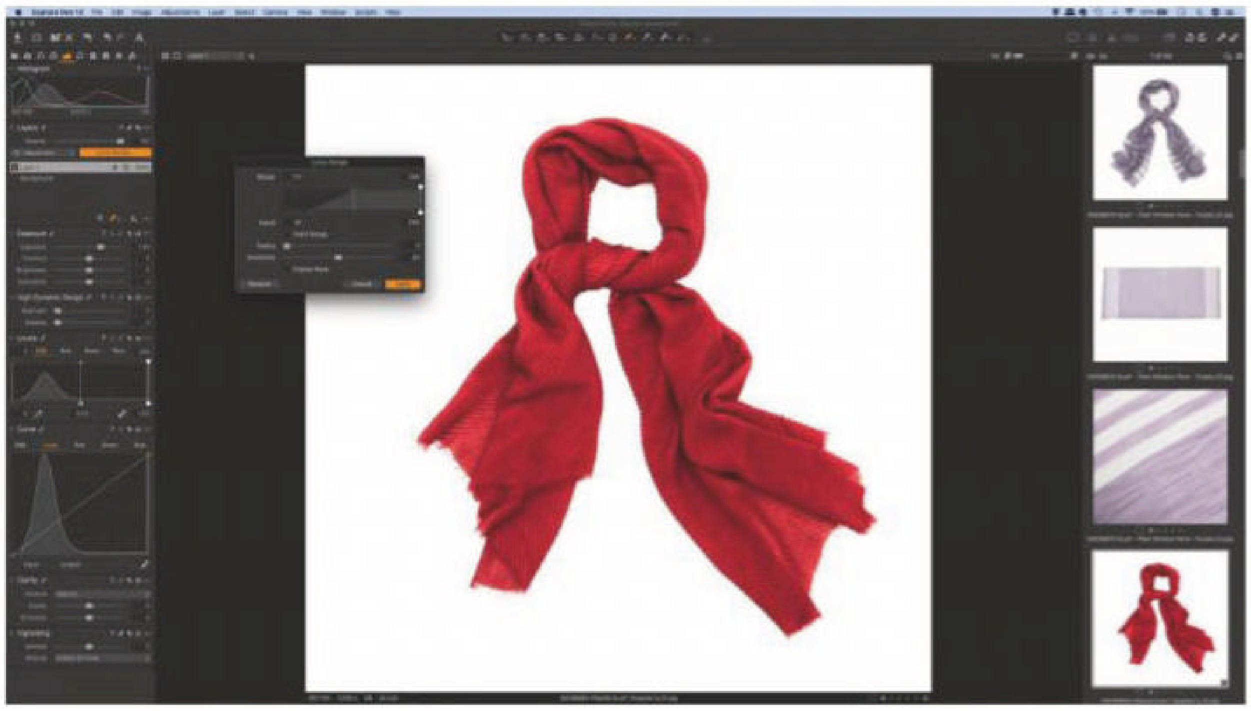
5 Paint on the mask

The mask is showing up in a few unwanted areas over the face and clothes. We can right-click it and Rasterize the mask (after which we won't be able to go back and use Luma Range). Now we can paint with the Draw/Erase mask tools to further fine-tune the area. Hit Alt+M for a handy grayscale view.



6 Review

Review each shot using the camera's screen. Does the picture have the look you want? Is the contrast right? What could make the shot better? Zoom in and check the detail. Is there enough shadow information? Is the shot sharp? Are the highlights clipped? Get it right in-camera.



The new Luma Range control makes isolating subjects much quicker and easier

Balancing the needs of experienced users and beginners alike is always a tough ask. As such, the steep learning curve remains. Capture One seems harder to get to grips with than, say, Lightroom. But it only takes a short while to get orientated, and the fresher look is certainly more welcoming. What's more, if you're interested in making the switch from another raw editor then many of the tools will be instantly recognisable.

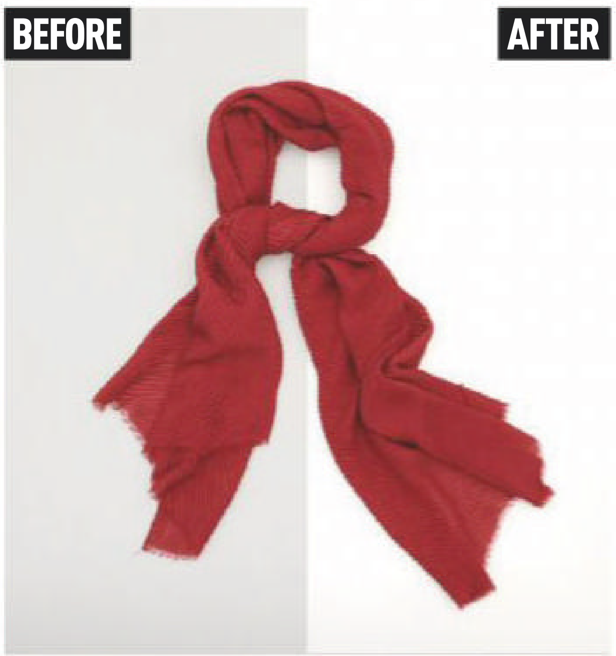
New Luma Range

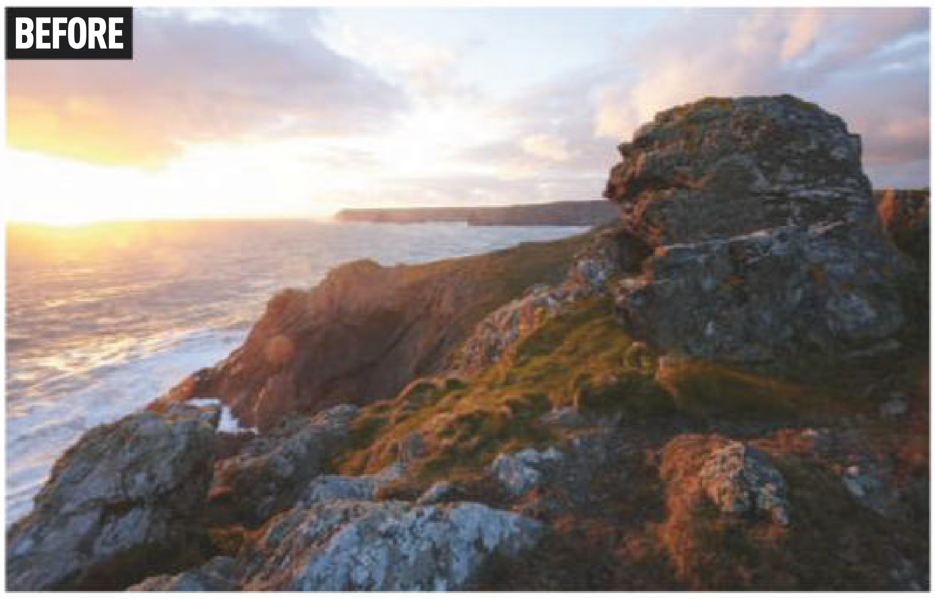
Over the past couple of years a new trend has emerged in raw editing for tools that allow for local parametric editing. These let us target parts of an image based on luminosity or colour, and the feature is now found in several raw editors. The terminology varies – in Lightroom it's known as Range Masking, in DxO it's incorporated into the U-Point technology, and now, in Capture One we are treated to Luma Range.

Capture One's new Luma Range control is arguably the best of the lot. It gives you ultimate control over the mask by allowing you to individually determine the fall-off in the shadows and highlights, and it also lets you either soften or refine the edges of the mask. It sounds complicated but in reality it's very intuitive, and in no time at all you're able to isolate and adjust intricate areas of a photo, making it easy to – for example – isolate the shadows in a rock formation or target the background in a high-key shot. You can even copy Luma Range adjustments from one image to another. Factor in Capture One's other masking tools, which can all be used in combination with Luma Range, and you have a set of controls that let you make local adjustments with unrivalled precision.

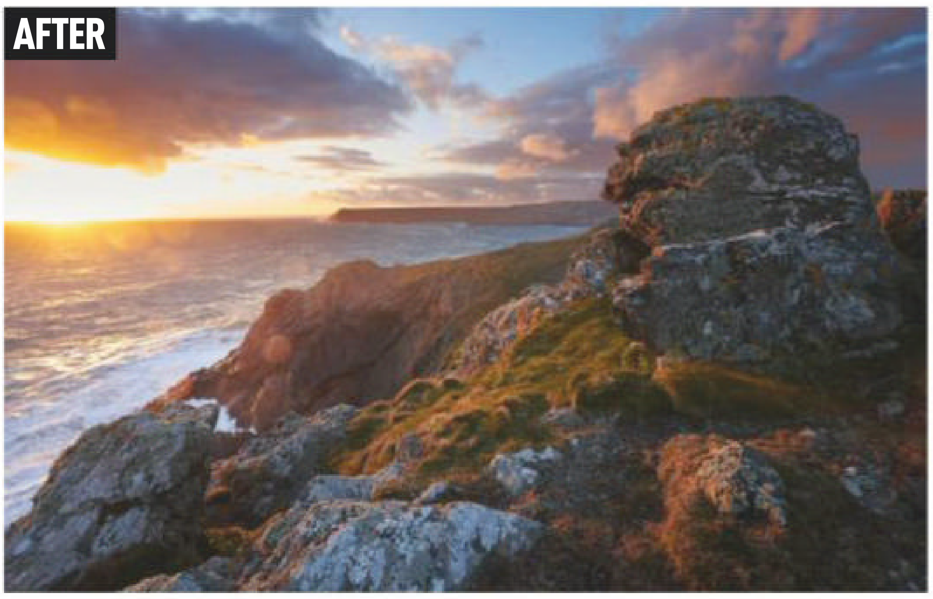
What else is new?

Capture One now supports all Fujifilm cameras. What's more, it also reads and interprets Fujifilm's popular in-camera film simulations. Developments have also been made that enable third-party plug-ins and extensions. A new Capture One SDK will allow any developer to create custom plug-ins that will help to make Capture One compatible with a variety of other editing tools. These features are all very welcome, but the true star of the show here is Luma Range. It could very well change the way you edit your photos for good.





Gradients are far more adjustable to allow for more transitional control



It's now much easier to get smoother results between sky and land

Improved Linear Gradients

THERE are vast improvements to the Linear Gradient tool in Capture One 12. Thanks to a new parametric editing engine, the gradient is far more adjustable than in previous versions. You're now able to adjust the size, shape and symmetry of the mask. This is done by either dragging, Alt-dragging or Shift-dragging each of the three lines that form the local adjustment. With the new asymmetrical control, you're able to change the transition on both sides of the central gradient point. It gives you a fine degree of control over the shape and size of the transition, which is especially helpful when adjusting skies, as it's often the point along the horizon that can be tricky to get right. If the gradient is slightly off, then the whole adjustment looks unnatural. But by controlling the transition, you can get a smoother, more subtle result between sky and land. Used in combination with the new Luma Range controls, it lets you create precise local adjustments in seconds.

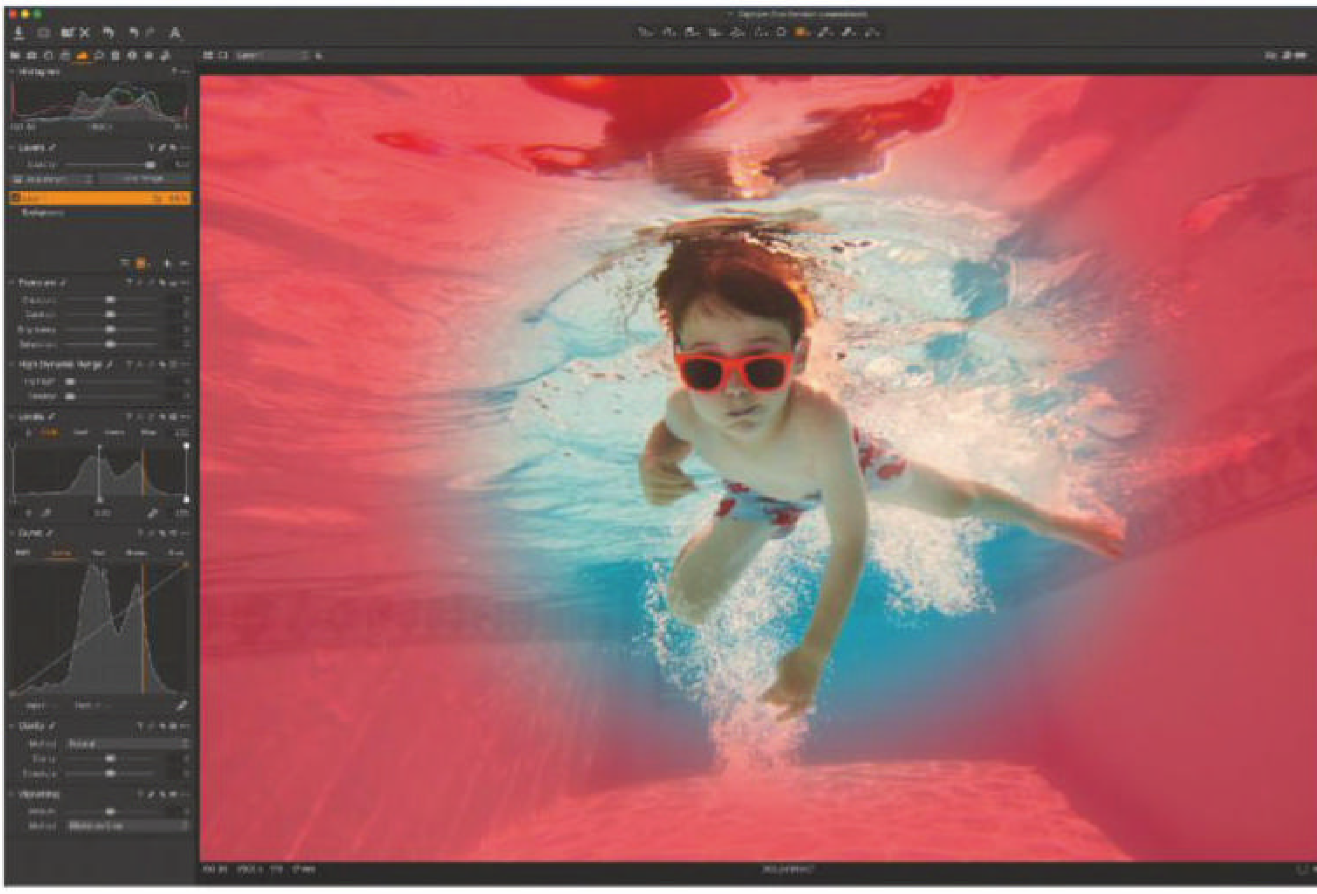
The new Radial Gradient tool makes targeting edge areas much easier

The new Radial Gradient tool

THE BRAND new Radial Gradient Mask lets you create circular adjustments, which is useful for making vignettes and changes to the edges of an image, or to target a smaller area such as a face with an inverted adjustment.

There are a couple of key features to get to grips with. First, the controls for defining the circular area. These are very intuitive. After dragging out the initial radial adjustment you'll see three circles. The inner or outer circles can be dragged to change the area of transition, and they can also be dragged to swap places, thereby inverting the adjustment to affect the part of the image inside the circle rather than outside it.

Like all local adjustments in Capture One, once you've defined the circular area to be adjusted, you then go on to either refine the area with the other masking tools, or if you're happy with the mask then you can go on to alter the tonal sliders to affect the area. The most obvious use for a radial gradient is to add a vignette to darken down corners, but you could also use an inverted circle to lift a face or boost contrast in specific areas of the image.



This local adjustment can then be refined using other masking tools or tonal adjustments

© ALLEN SHEFFIELD

© DARELL WHITEHEAD

1 All the Fun of the Fair by Allen Sheffield Intentional movement has been expertly used here for this colourful and vibrant image.

2 Splash by Darrell Whitehead A great and unusual portrait which stands out from the page thanks to its bold use of colour and lines.

Join the Club

This creative Leicester-based club is far from a typical camera club

When was the club founded?
The club was founded in January 2016 by a trio of local amateur photographers.

What does your club offer to new members?
Weary of camera clubs offering no variety and little opportunity to stretch their creativity, Allen Sheffield, Sean Lawrence and Sean Jarvis launched Click Group Shoots. The group has seen its membership rise steadily over the past three years. Attracting photographers with all levels of skills, from beginners to professionals, the group offers a rich variety of creative subject matters along with a friendly atmosphere to grow an individual's skills.

Describe a typical club meeting.
As we use a common space for our shoots, a typical evening would start with the organisers arriving at 6pm to set up lighting, backdrops, props, etc., ensure that tea, coffee and biscuits are available, then greet our models at 6.30pm and ensure they have everything with them that they will need. Up front communication will have happened in depth, well in advance of the shoot, to ensure that a creative and efficient evening is enjoyed by all.

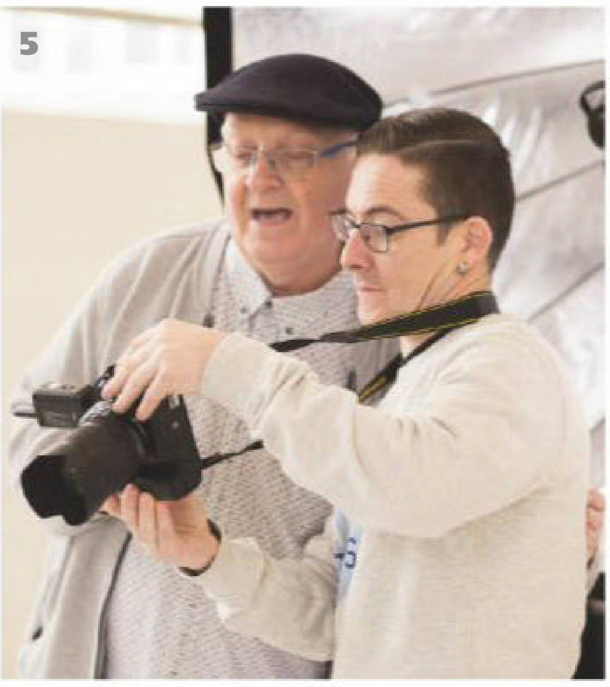
On occasion, we can have up to three models or dancers in the studio, so this means setting up three shoot sets with different lighting set-ups and trigger settings. Our photographers tend to arrive from 6.45pm to have a good chat with each other, grab teas, coffees etc. and then start doing their own exposure checks.

We set up lighting as a base that will produce excellent results. If anyone wishes to change light set-ups, they are welcome to, as long as they return them to how they found it. Photographers break up into teams and a shoot order is established within each team. This order is rotated because not everyone wants to be the first to shoot.

Each photographer is allocated an amount of time, ensuring that everyone gets equal time with their model/dancer. This is the fairest way to ensure no-one 'hogs' the subject. As each set of photographers completes their session with the model, they move onto the next shoot set and model/dancer.

We always encourage photographers to bring their own ideas and props, to ensure that they get a unique set of images from every shoot. This is something that is sometimes difficult at group shoots.

Do you invite guest speakers?
We aren't a traditional camera club and do not hold speaker evenings or competitions. We hold workshops periodically, covering subject matter that is of interest to our members. In addition to weekly shoots, we have periodic spectaculars based on a strong theme. Recent themes have included, Oliver!, The Mad Hatter's Tea Party, and Peaky Blinders.



© SEAN LAWRENCE

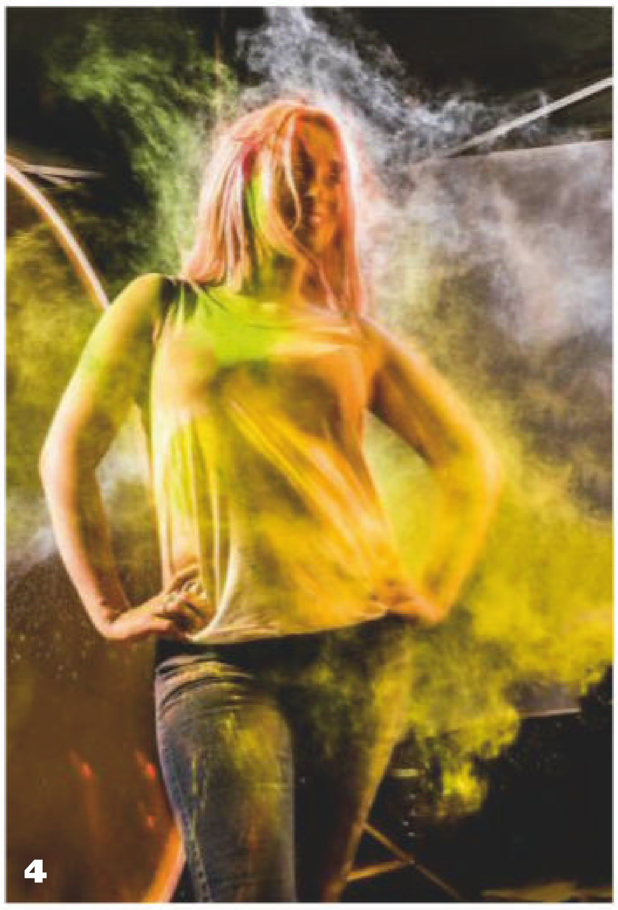
How many members do you have?
We have around 280 members of which there is an active core of some 50 photographers. Attendee numbers vary from week to week depending on the popularity of the theme for that week. We do not charge a weekly/monthly or annual subscription. Members simply pay on the nights that they attend. We also provide reduced rates for students in full-time education.

What are the club's goals for the future?
Our goal is to continue to be the most creative group in the area. We also intend to continue to provide support and guidance for new/novice photographers. In addition, we aim to continue to offer the widest variety of themes and subjects for our shoots.

Want to see your club featured on these pages? Drop us a line for more information at ap@ti-media.com.

3 In the Cloud by Darrell Whitehead The pose and the formation of the dust cloud work together perfectly in this beautiful composition.

© DARRELL WHITEHEAD



4

© GARETH NORMAN

5 One on One by Sean Lawrence Click Group Shoots is a little bit different from other photography clubs – each meeting features a shoot.

6

© GARETH NORMAN

4 Holi Moli! by Gareth Norman A fantastic example of the kind of shot that studio set-ups typically produce.

6 Contemplation by Gareth Norman The muted colour palette, plus the figure in the background, creates an interesting story.

7 Stressed by Darell Whitehead Emotion has been captured very well in this shot – especially thanks to eye contact.

7

© DARRELL WHITEHEAD

8 Pure Elegance by Allen Sheffield An interesting take on a dance portrait: using the bold black background helps the dancer to be even more striking.

8

© ALLEN SHEFFIELD

Club essentials

Click Group Shoots

Elliott Hall, Albion Street, Leicester

Meets Every Wednesday, 7-9pm

Membership No membership fee. Money paid per meeting attended

Contact Allen on 07709 034410 or Sean on 07720 609533

Website clickgroupshoots.wixsite.com/click

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For this image of the sun's rays shining through the clouds we metered for the highlights and then used Lightroom to boost the shadow detail. **Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6E ED VR AF-P, 1/500sec at f/5.6, ISO 200**

Nikon D3500

The D3500 is Nikon's latest entry-level DSLR. **Audley Jarvis** investigates whether it's a good beginners' buy for those thinking about pursuing photography as a hobby

The D3500 takes over from 2016's D3400 as the entry-point to Nikon's DSLR range. As such it's the cheapest DSLR Nikon offers, costing around £120 less than the more advanced D5600. While the D3500 doesn't differ all that much internally from the D3400, on the outside it's all change with the newer model being smaller and lighter, while also gaining some distinct handling advantages thanks to a re-designed body and control layout.

Features

The D3500 is built around a 24.2MP APS-C CMOS sensor and Nikon's EXPEED 4 image processor – a pairing that has served a number of other Nikon DSLRs extremely well in recent years. While effective resolution is identical to both the D3400 and D5600, Nikon has said that the D3500 is fitted with an updated sensor. As with many other recent Nikon DSLR releases, the D3500 does without an optical low-pass filter, so as to maximise the sensor's ability to resolve fine detail.

For those looking to shoot mainly JPEGs, the D3500 comes with the usual range of handy processing tools. This includes Nikon's proprietary shadow-boosting Active D-Lighting technology, alongside tools for vignette control, distortion control and noise reduction. Furthermore, users can also select from a range of seven Picture Controls that adjust things like contrast, saturation and sharpness to give images a specific look and feel. As ever the options are: Standard, Neutral, Vivid, Monochrome, Portrait, Landscape and Flat.

In terms of exposure modes the D3500 offers Program, Aperture-priority, Shutter-priority and Manual (PASM) modes for more experienced users, alongside a fully automatic Auto mode for point-and-shoot duties and a Forced Flash Off mode. In addition, there are four individual Scene modes: Portrait, Sports, Close-up and Night Portrait, plus an Effects mode that allows you to apply a range of digital filter effects at the point of capture.

Last but not least, is Nikon's beginner-friendly Guide Mode. Accessed directly from the mode dial, Guide Mode essentially disables the in-camera menu and replaces it with a set of options tailored to specific situations. These aim to explain (in the simplest possible terms) how to use the camera's key settings to the best effect. As before

Data file

	Nikon D3500
Price	£409 (with Nikon 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 AF-P VR lens)
Sensor	24.2MP APS-C CMOS
Output size	6000 x 4000 pixels
Focal length mag	1.5x
Lens mount	Nikon F
Shutter speeds	30-1/4,000sec
Sensitivity	ISO 100-25,600
Exposure modes	PASM, Auto, Guide, No Flash, Scene x4, Special Effects
Metering	Matrix, Centre-weighted, Spot
Exposure comp	±5EV in 1/3EV steps
Burst shooting	5fps continuous shooting
Screen	3in, 921k-dot fixed TFT LCD
Viewfinder	Pentamirror type, 95% coverage at 0.85x
AF points	11-AF point system
Video	Full HD (1920x1080), HD (1080x720)
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Power	EN-EL14a Li-ion battery
Battery life	1,550 shots per charge
Dimensions	124x97x69.5mm
Weight	415g (with battery and card)

Focal points

Despite its entry-level positioning the D3500 comes with a number of useful features

Active D-Lighting

This useful processing tool is designed to lighten shadow areas and preserve highlight detail when faced with high-contrast scenes. The camera allows you to set Active D-Lighting to 'on' or 'off' settings.

Built-in flash

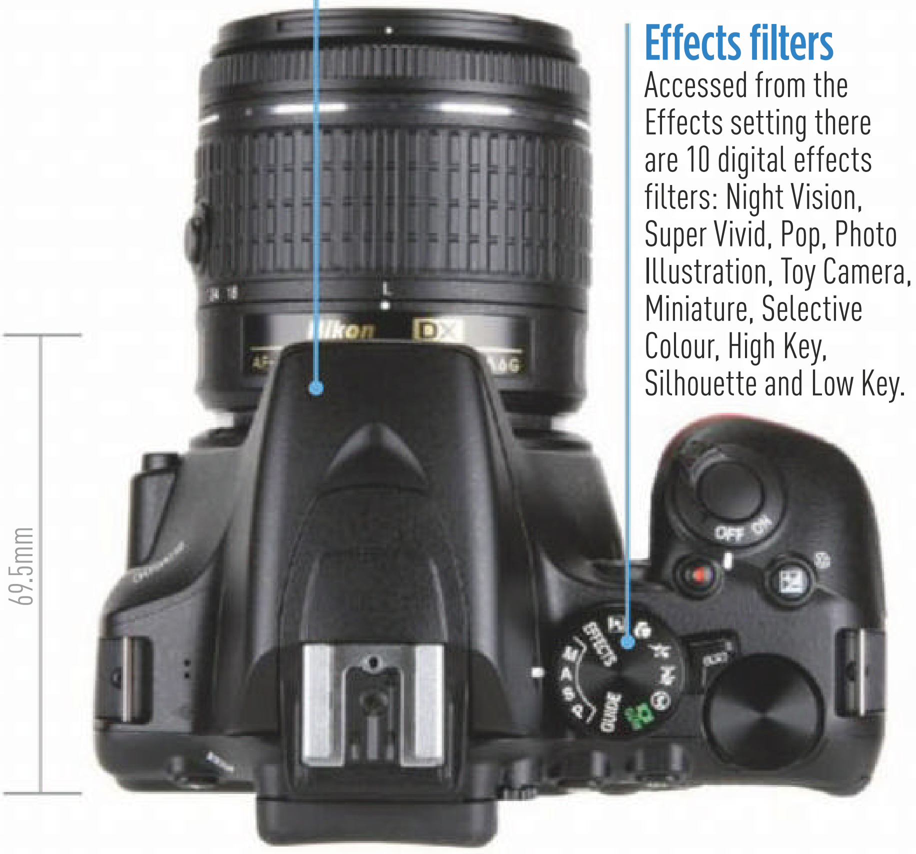
The built-in flash isn't particularly powerful but can be used to illuminate close subjects. It's also compatible with Nikon's Creative Lighting System, which allows you to use the pop-up flash to fire compatible flashguns.

Retouch menu

Like its predecessor, the D3500 provides an extensive Retouch menu, which includes the ability to convert raw files to JPEGs as well as making a range of adjustments to captured images.

Effects filters

Accessed from the Effects setting there are 10 digital effects filters: Night Vision, Super Vivid, Pop, Photo Illustration, Toy Camera, Miniature, Selective Colour, High Key, Silhouette and Low Key.

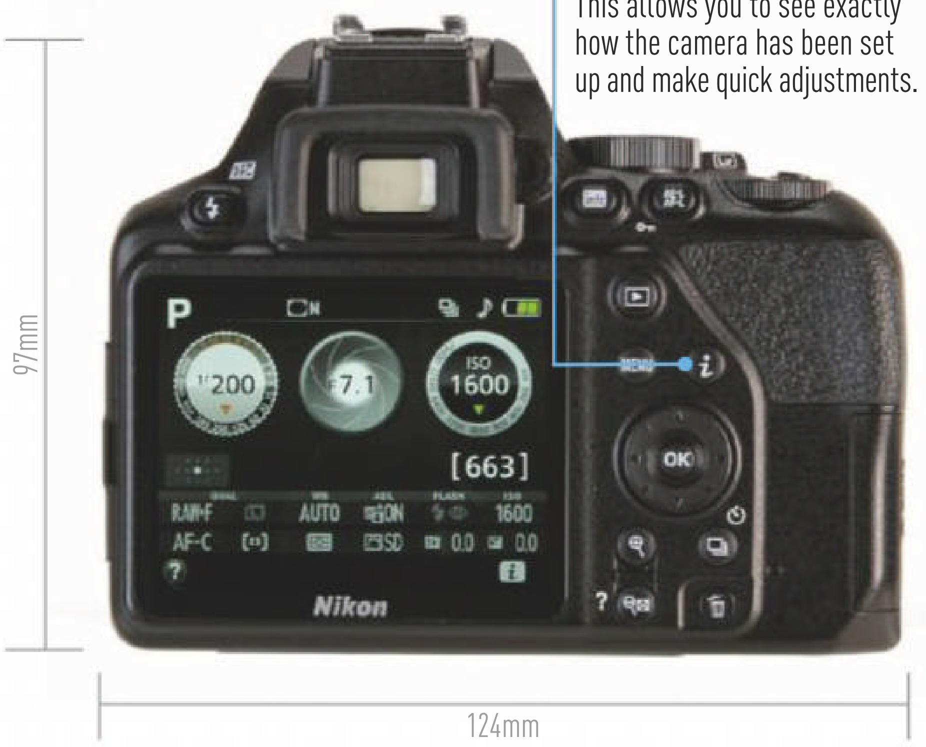


Rear display/Viewfinder

The D3500 is fitted with a fixed 3-inch, 921k-dot LCD screen that is vivid and sharp, but lacks the touchscreen capabilities of the D5600's display. The D3500's pentamirror-type viewfinder provides 95% frame coverage.

Quick Menu

Pressing the 'i' button on the back of the D3500 brings up a Quick Menu on the rear display that provides direct access to all of the key camera settings. This allows you to see exactly how the camera has been set up and make quick adjustments.



users are given a choice of 'Easy' and 'Advanced' shooting options, with the latter helping new users to do things like freeze motion, soften backgrounds and capture flowing water using a long exposure. While more experienced DSLR users can simply avoid Guide Mode altogether, first-time DSLR users may well find it immensely helpful.

Video capability extends to 1080p Full HD video at up to 60fps, which compares favourably with the 1080p/30fps maximum setting of the Canon 2000D. Sound is recorded by a built-in monaural microphone that can be adjusted via the in-camera menu, although in keeping with the D3400 there's no input for an external microphone – for this you'll want to look at the D5600.

In terms of connectivity, the D3500 comes with Nikon's proprietary SnapBridge technology, although as with the D3400 this comes at the expense of Wi-Fi, which is not supported. Instead, SnapBridge employs Bluetooth and connects directly to your phone or tablet via Nikon's Wireless Mobile Utility (WMU) app. Once installed, you can choose to automatically transfer 2MB images directly to a connected smartphone or tablet, or you can manually export images at their original size. New for the D3500 is the ability to control the camera remotely via the WMU app too. Note that this does come at the expense of the infrared receiver that was located on the front of the D3400, which has been removed from the D3500. Pairing and set up is a straightforward task, and we found SnapBridge worked flawlessly during our time with the D3500.

Body and design

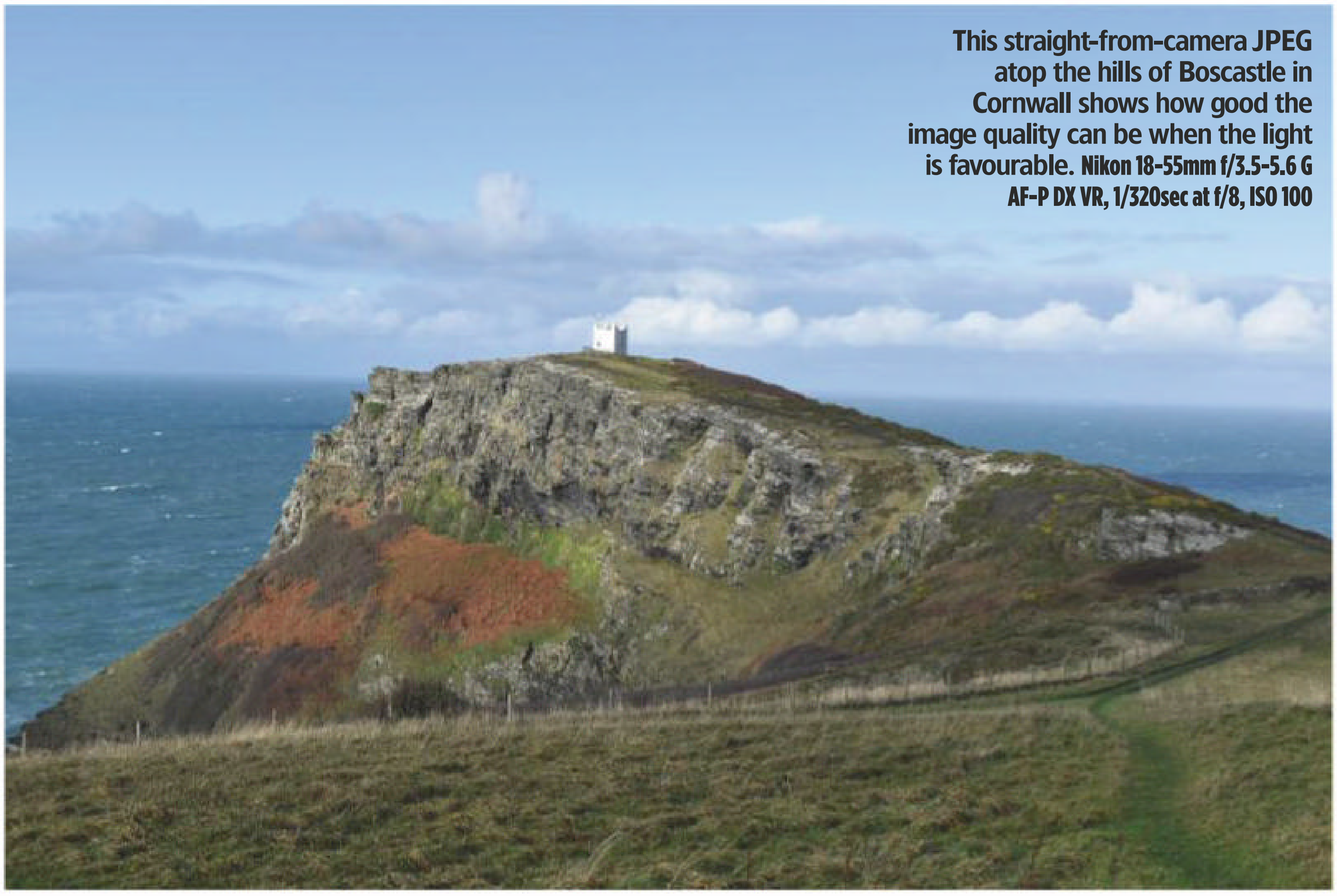
This new model sports a slimmed down and, to our minds at least, slightly more stylish look. It's slightly smaller (and lighter) overall. This is primarily down to the fact that the D3500 is housed within a modified D5600 body, which at the time of its release in 2016 was billed as one of the smallest DSLRs on the market.

The handgrip is actually slightly wider and squarer than it was on the D3400, and combined with the more pronounced thumb-rest on the back, helps improve the camera's general handling and also makes it feel more balanced when using larger lenses. Nikon has also relocated many of the buttons, moving them from the left-hand side of the camera to the right-hand side and top plate. The small control wheel found on the back of the D3400 has also been replaced with a prominent wheel on the top plate – as per the D5600. Likewise, the Live View button has been replaced with a small lever to the side of the exposure mode dial. Sadly though, the Fn button has been removed.

Overall, while there was nothing inherently wrong with the design and handling of the D3400, we found that the redesigned body and remapped controls of the D3500 make it a more enjoyable camera to use overall.

In terms of build quality, the D3500 is encased within a polycarbonate shell that's robust enough to withstand the odd knock, but obviously not up to the same standard as the magnesium alloy casings employed by models higher up the range. Neither is the camera weather-sealed, although to be fair we wouldn't really expect that given its price and positioning.

A shot from a 5fps burst **Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6E ED VR AF-P, 1/1600sec at f/5.6, ISO 400**



This straight-from-camera JPEG atop the hills of Boscastle in Cornwall shows how good the image quality can be when the light is favourable. **Nikon 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 G AF-P DX VR, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100**

Performance

While the D3500 isn't as powerful as more expensive Nikon DSLRs it remains a capable little camera in all but the most demanding situations. During timed tests we recorded 100 full-resolution JPEGs at 5fps before the memory buffer filled. In raw capture this dropped to around 12 consecutive images, while in raw+JPEG the figure was just six images. All in all, these figures are respectable and certainly on par with what we'd expect of an entry-level DSLR. By way of comparison, the Canon 2000D records just 40 full-res JPEGs before the frame rate drops, although the figures for raw and raw+JPEG are almost identical as the D3500.

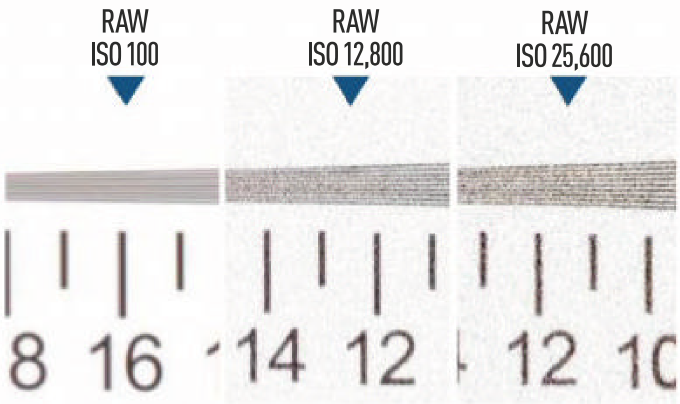
Autofocus duties are catered for by the same Nikon Multi-CAM 1000 module employed by the D3400. It provides 11 AF-points arranged in a diamond formation across the viewfinder. Focus lock speeds through the viewfinder are impressively quick, with the AF module locking on the instant you half-press the shutter button. Switching to Live View the D3500 remains fast and accurate in all but the dimmest light, and is faster than Canon's EOS 2000D, which is painfully slow by comparison.

The D3400 was already a step ahead of the competition with regards to battery life, and the D3500 takes this further. The Nikon EN-EL14a Li-ion battery is now good for 1500 shots on a single charge – as opposed to 1200 on the D3400. By way of comparison, the Canon EOS 2000D is rated for around 500 shots per charge, while the D5600 is capable of 820. The D3500 is therefore, and by some margin, a class-leader in this respect. AP

Resolution

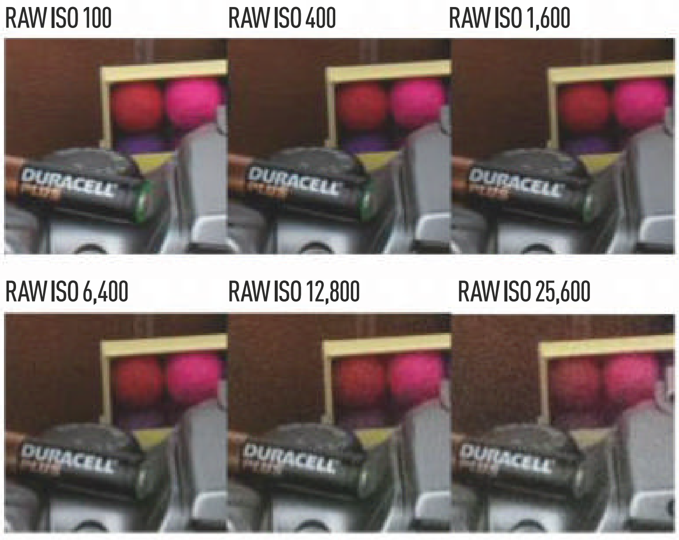
Below are details taken from our resolution test chart pattern (shown above)

Shooting in raw, the D3500 resolved 3,200l/ph between ISO 100 and ISO 400. At ISO 800 the figure was 3,000l/ph. It's only at ISO 3200 that resolution dips below 3,000l/ph. At ISO 6400 the D3500 produced a figure of 2,800l/ph followed by 2,500l/ph at ISO 12,800. The highest ISO 25,600 setting recorded 2,300l/ph.



Noise

As with resolution we achieved better results with manually processed raw files over in-camera JPEGs. At sensitivities under ISO 800 images are clean and sharp. At ISO 3200, image quality does begin to break down more markedly, with elements of luminance noise evident in JPEGs and processed raw files. You still get useable results at ISO 3200, but it's harder to disguise the effects of noise at ISO 6400 and above.



Verdict

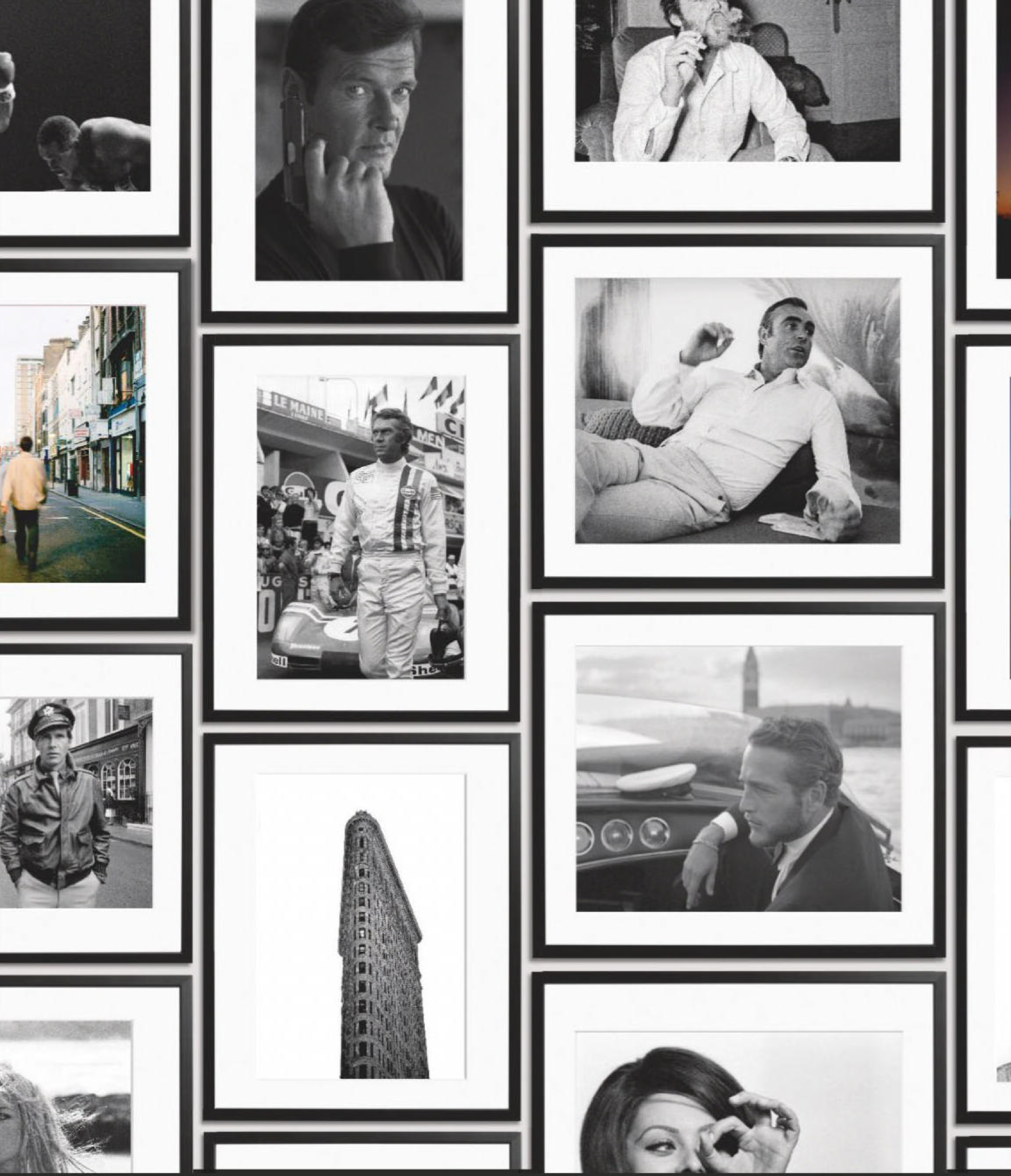
WHILE the D3500 inherits much from the D3400 that preceded it, there are some differences which combine to make the D3500 a better camera overall. The redesigned body clearly borrows a lot from the upper entry-level D5600 and the enlarged handgrip helps to make the camera feel more comfortable and better balanced when used with larger, heavier lenses. On top of this, the battery life has improved and the images it outputs are very respectable.

Available for around £410 with the 18-55mm AF-P VR lens, or £380 with the non-VR 18-55mm AF-P lens, the D3500 is keenly priced and represents excellent value for money. If you can live without the slightly larger vari-angle touchscreen and more advanced 39-point autofocus system offered by the D5600, then the D3500 is undoubtedly an excellent choice for the first-time DSLR buyer. In all, it's a reliable little camera that we have absolutely no hesitation in recommending to beginners.

For and against

- + Competitively priced
- + Excellent image quality
- + Class-leading battery performance
- + Beginner-friendly guide mode
- − Lacks vari-angle touchscreen of D5600
- − No weather-sealing
- − Fairly basic 11-point AF system

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	8/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10
IMAGE QUALITY	8/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10



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With lens corrections turned off you'll notice pincushion distortion, which is clearly obvious towards the edge of the frame in this image
Sony A7 III (APS-C crop mode), 1/1000sec at f/1.4, ISO 400

Sigma 56mm f/1.4 DC DN | C

Sigma's third f/1.4 prime lens for Sony E and Micro Four Thirds mounts has great promise. **Michael Topham** finds out if it's all that we had hoped for

Back in 2016, Sigma released the 30mm f/1.4 DC DN | C – a prime lens designed for APS-C sensors, made available in Sony E and Micro Four Thirds lens mounts. A year later Sigma expanded its range of fast DC DN primes with the wide 16mm f/1.4 DC DN | C. This became the world's first interchangeable lens for Sony E-mount cameras in the APS-C format to offer a fast f/1.4 maximum aperture at this focal length. The 56mm f/1.4 DC DN | C completes the company's large aperture series of portable wideangle, standard and telephoto prime lenses for Sony E-mount and Micro Four Thirds. With the E-mount version equivalent to 84mm and the Micro Four Thirds version offering 112mm coverage, it'll appeal to mirrorless users after a fast mid-telephoto lens that's well suited to a variety of applications such as portraiture, reportage, travel and low-light. Micro Four Thirds users will find that it slots nicely into the gap between the 85mm equivalent lenses already available and longer focal length primes. Owners of Sony APS-C mirrorless cameras will be interested in it too as there's limited choice when it comes to fast E-mount lenses of this focal length, with the closest being Sony's E 50mm f/1.8 OSS (£219).

Features

Without having to create an image circle large enough to cover a 35mm full-frame sensor, the lens is relatively small and light, especially when you consider that it has an f/1.4 maximum aperture. It's the smallest of the three DC DN lenses Sigma has made and is considerably more compact than the company's 16mm f/1.4 DC DN | C. The optical construction is made up of 10 elements in 6 groups, and to ensure it offers high-performance at an affordable price point, one special low dispersion (SLD) glass

The focal length and fast maximum aperture are suitable for pet portraits and those times when you'd like to defocus busy backgrounds on purpose **Sony A6500, 1/25sec at f/1.4, ISO 1600**

element and two aspherical elements are employed to curtail optical aberrations. To reduce flare, Sigma's Super Multi-Layer coatings are also applied to the front element.

There obviously isn't much point having an f/1.4 aperture if it renders unattractive bokeh, so Sigma has sensibly employed nine rounded aperture blades. These are clearly visible when you look down the barrel and ensure that when the lens is stopped down and used at its widest aperture settings, out-of-focus areas show attractive circular specular highlights with smooth transitions.

The lens doesn't offer any form of optical stabilisation and is electronically controlled throughout. There is no aperture ring and the focus ring is a fly-by-wire electronic affair, just like Sigma's other DC DN primes. To make focusing fast and smooth, the lens features a stepping motor that goes about its business quickly and quietly. Added to all this, autofocus is fully compatible with Sony's Fast Hybrid AF system and AF tracking and Eye AF modes.

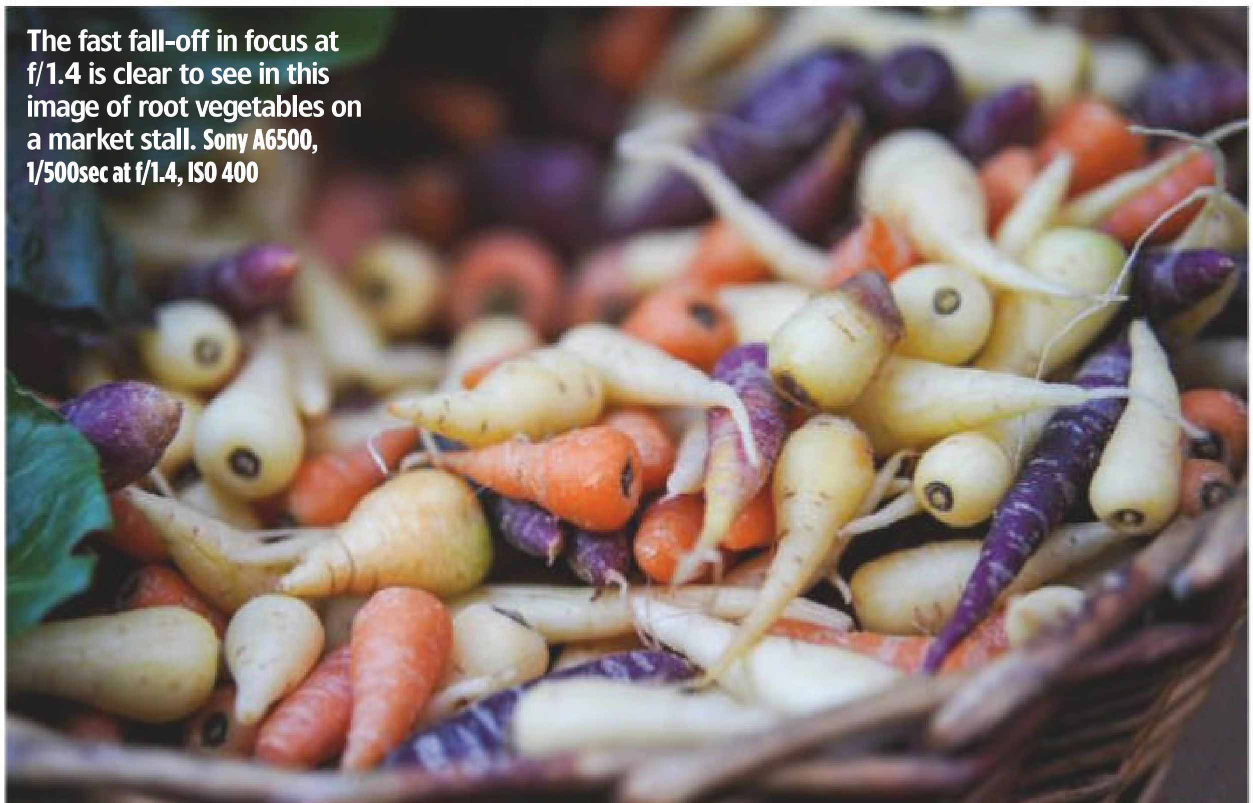
Other features include its 50cm minimum focusing distance and the acceptance of filters and adapters via a 56mm thread at the front. It's at this point I should also point out the lens employs internal focusing, so should you use an ND grad or polarising filter with it, you don't have to worry about the front element turning. The lens weighs 280g on the scales and as part of the boxed contents you get front and rear caps and a plastic hood (LH582-01) that can be reversed when it's not being used.

Build and handling

The lens has a clean black aesthetic that we have come to expect from Sigma ever since the company announced its 'Global Vision' series, which is the collective name for its Art, Sports and Contemporary lenses. The lens designation and minimum focus distance are both printed on the barrel and the only other marking of note is the silver circle with the letter C inside it that tells us it's part of Sigma's Contemporary range. Just to recap, the ethos of Sigma's Contemporary lenses is to offer high performance whilst keeping them as compact and lightweight as possible.

First impressions of the lens out of the box were that it's smaller than I'd expected, feeling reassuringly solid and well constructed in the hand. It pairs up nicely with small mirrorless cameras without adding unwanted bulk and the brass metal mount comes with a rubber sealing that compresses against the camera mount to form an effective barrier against dust and moisture. The ribbed focus ring is easy to find from behind the viewfinder and my experience of manually focusing the lens was very positive, made all the better by the incredibly smooth motion of the focus ring and the magnified view offered by the Sony A6500 I was testing it with. I found extremely precise shifts in focus easy to perform, with a slow turn of the ring shifting focus ever so slightly. To jump from the minimum focusing distance to infinity takes four or five sharp twists of the focus ring.

With no AF/MF switch on the barrel, you're required to select the focus mode via the camera. Autofocus is brisk and signs of hunting were few and far between. Only on the odd occasion in low light did the lens slow to hunt back and forth a little before it acquired focus on a close subject. Just as Sigma claims, the



The fast fall-off in focus at f/1.4 is clear to see in this image of root vegetables on a market stall. **Sony A6500, 1/500sec at f/1.4, ISO 400**

Stopping the lens down to f/4 mitigates corner shading at the edge. Sony A6500, 1/250sec at f/4, ISO 400

stepping motor is very quiet indeed, however if you hold the lens close to your ear you can just about make out a faint whir when it focuses.

Image quality

The lens was predominantly used with Sony's A6500 – a compact combination that was easy to slip into a jacket pocket and pull out and use inconspicuously. Shooting wide open at f/1.4 produces satisfying results, with sharply defined subjects standing out against smooth blurred backgrounds. The aesthetic of out-of-focus highlights at wide apertures is pleasing too, with nicely rendered circular highlights in the centre of the frame. Cat's-eye bokeh was observed towards the edge at f/1.4, but this is less pronounced if you stop down. Centre sharpness is good at f/1.4, but stopping down and using it between f/2 and f/4 does yield sharper results. Corner sharpness also gradually improves by stopping down to f/5.6.

With in-camera optical corrections switched off, vignetting is noticeable, with corners appearing approximately 1.2EV darker than the centre at f/1.4. The aesthetic of this corner shading is complimentary to portraiture and centrally framed subjects though. Vignetting becomes less obvious at f/2.8 and is barely noticeable at f/4. For an 84mm equivalent fixed lens on an APS-C camera, I was a little surprised to find that it exhibits quite strong pincushion distortion when lens corrections are turned off, which the opening shot to this review illustrates. This wasn't a major concern however as the built-in lens profile that was applied to a majority of my shots turned out to be highly effective at ensuring straight lines were kept straight. Similarly, chromatic aberrations were traced along high-contrast edges when in-camera corrections are turned off. Some mild traces of purple and green fringes of colour were still obvious in shots when the built-in lens profile was applied, so you may want to apply some additional manual correction during post processing. AP

Verdict

WITH the 56mm f/1.4 DC DN | C, Sigma has produced a very appealing compact prime for Micro Four Thirds and Sony E-mount users. It doesn't dwarf small cameras and those who want a fast prime that's neither too heavy or too cumbersome will enjoy the handling and overall experience of using it.

Priced at £399, this optic represents good value for money, especially when you consider how well built it is and the attractive images it delivers. It doesn't provide optical image stabilisation and the focus mode can't be set to manual via an AF/MF switch, but both of these exclusions aren't unusual on a lens of its pedigree. For the price and size of the lens you can't really argue with its overall performance.

All in all, this is another welcome addition in Sigma's Contemporary lineup and will capture the attention of many mirrorless users who've hungered for a fast and impressive performing f/1.4 prime at relatively low cost for some time.

Data file

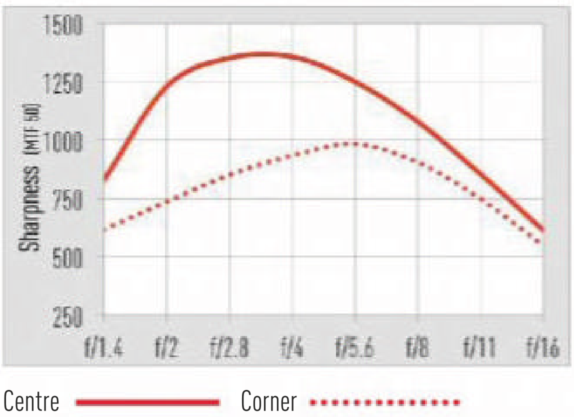
Price £399
Filter diameter 55mm
Lens elements 10
Groups 6
Aperture blades 9
Aperture f/1.4-f/16
Minimum focus distance 50cm
Dimensions 66.5x59.5mm
Weight 280g
Lens mount Sony E-mount, Micro Four Thirds
Included accessories Lens caps, lens hood

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

Sigma 56mm f/1.4 DC DN | C

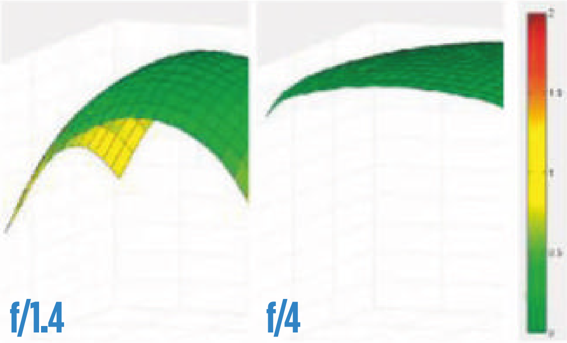
Resolution

Our Image Engineering Tests reveal the lens is sharper in the centre than at the edge throughout the aperture range. Centre sharpness improves by stopping down from f/1.4 to f/2 and peaks between f/2.8 and f/4. Corner sharpness doesn't reach the same level as centre sharpness, but does steadily improve from f/1.4 to f/5.6. The best edge-to-edge sharpness is found around f/5.6-f/6.3. Diffraction has the effect of softening images at f/16.



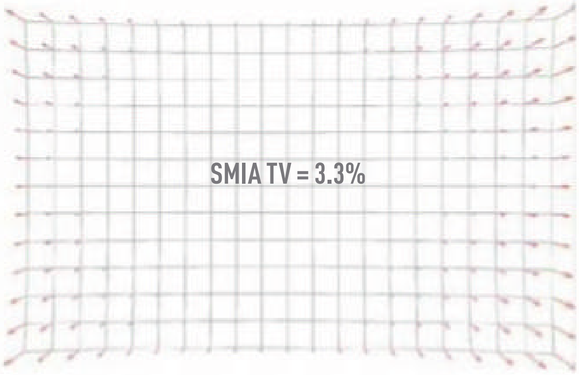
Shading

Our tests reveal the corners of images appear darker than the centre by approximately 1.2EV. Corner shading becomes less obvious when the lens is stopped down, with edges measuring around 0.7EV darker than the centre at f/2 and vignetting becoming almost completely absent at f/4.



Curvilinear distortion

With all lens corrections switched off, the lens exhibits obvious pincushion-type curvature of lines towards the edge of the frame. If you're shooting subjects with straight lines near the corners and want distortion-free images out of the camera, you'll want to turn in-camera lens corrections on.



HDR software

Capture detail in all complex scenes using High Dynamic Range photography. **James Abbott** tests six of the best HDR software options for every budget

Presets

Many HDR software packages offer ready-to-apply presets, which let you create a certain type of HDR look in an instant.

Interface

You'll want to look for an interface that's intuitive to navigate. This will allow you to process your images quickly with minimal fuss.

The 'look'

Some software packages create a stronger HDR look than others so it's worth doing your research first if you'd like to produce natural results.

Subscription

Many HDR software options can be purchased outright, but others such as Lightroom CC Classic are part of a subscription package.

Localised adjustments

It's good to choose HDR software that gives you the option to make area-specific adjustments as well as global ones.

Data file

	Raw processing	HDR Presets	Layers	Single image pressing	Native HDR file format	Operating system	System requirements Mac	System requirements PC	Price
easyHDR 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mac & PC	macOS 10.10 and above	Pentium IV and above, Windows XP 32/64-bit and above, 4GB RAM	From €35
Nik HDR Efex Pro	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Mac & PC	macOS 10.12 and higher, Intel Core i5 or higher, 4GB RAM	Intel Core i5 or higher, 4GB RAM, Windows 7 SP1 or higher	£59
Photomatix Pro 6	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Mac & PC	macOS 10.6 or higher 64-bit, 4GB RAM	Windows XP or higher 64-bit, 4GB RAM	£70
Photoshop Elements 2019	Not for HDR	No	Yes	Yes	No	Mac & PC	64-bit multicore Intel processor, macOS X 10.12 or above, 4GB of RAM	1.6GHz or faster with SSE2 support, 64-bit Windows 7 with SP 1, 4GB of RAM	£90
Aurora HDR 2019	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mac & PC	From early 2010 or newer, 8GB RAM	Windows 7 64-bit or above, 8GB RAM, Open GL 3.3 or later compatible Graphics Cards	£92
Lightroom CC Classic	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Yes DNG	Mac & PC	Multicore 64-bit Intel processor, 4GB RAM, Mac OS 10.12 or above	2GHz 64-bit processor, 4GB RAM, Windows 7 SP1 or above	From £119 per year

easyHDR 3 gives a strong HDR look to images

easyHDR 3

● From €35 ● www.easyhdr.com

WHEN you come across HDR software with a name like easyHDR, you have an expectation that the software will be, well, easy to use. And it's safe to say that despite offering a large range of HDR controls and presets, it is indeed easy to use thanks to the range of presets that provide quick and easy one-click effects.

For photographers requiring a greater level of control, there are also manual controls which can be used to fine-tune the default HDR conversion or one of the 22 other presets available. Plus, there are Layers that can be applied to add localised adjustments with several tools. These tools are slightly cruder than those available in Lightroom and Aurora HDR, but they are effective and allow you to take more control of your HDR images using Layers. Work in progress can be saved using easyHDR's native file type that can save your progress before final output.

Interface layout

The overall interface is well laid out and not too overwhelming despite the level of control available, and it doesn't take long at all to work out what each of the manual control sliders are used for. The images produced by easyHDR 3 are undeniably HDR images that have a stronger HDR look than what can be achieved with Aurora HDR 2019 and Lightroom CC, and is more in line with Photomatix. This isn't a problem if you're aiming for a strong HDR look, but if you prefer HDR that's a bit more subtle, Lightroom and Aurora may be better options.

One issue with the software when importing raw files, rather than processed JPEGs or TIFFs that have had white balance corrected, is that white balance doesn't appear faithful to the final output file when viewed in the interface. What appears perfect in the interface comes out too warm, or cold, in the output image.

EasyHDR 3 is available with two license types: one that's €35 for home, or non-profit use, and a second that's €59 for commercial use. Totally natural HDR isn't possible, but that's not a problem if you prefer a more distinct HDR image style. The white-balance discrepancy is a negative but is something that, over time, you could become attuned to.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

RATINGS IN THIS ROUND-UP ARE BASED PURELY UPON USING THE SOFTWARE FOR HDR PROCESSING, AND NOT FOR ANY OTHER IMAGE-EDITING TASKS

Applying localised adjustments is rather fiddly

Nik HDR Efex Pro

● £59 (whole collection)
● nikcollection.dxo.com

NIK SOFTWARE has had a tumultuous few years after being bought by Google, which eventually led to the software being given away for free while support was dropped, but the well-respected suite of seven plug-ins, which includes HDR Efex Pro, is now part of DxO.

If you've ever used Nik HDR Efex Pro in the past, you'll find the experience identical despite the software being part of the DxO stable. One thing, however, that must be noted is that as a plug-in, rather than a standalone program, you'll need a compatible host program to run the software; this is either Photoshop or Lightroom.

Once images are loaded into HDR Efex you're taken to an easy-to-use window where you can take control of image Alignment, Ghost Reduction and Chromatic Aberration where a loupe is available to zoom into the image. From here you move to the main interface where you'll find 28 presets and extremely easy-to-use manual controls on the right. As with easyHDR and Photomatix, the presets can be used as a starting point with the manual adjustments offering fine-control.

Localised adjustments

HDR Efex also includes localised adjustments in the form of upper and lower Graduated Neutral Density and also Control Points that can be placed to control nine different settings. These are fiddly to use, and unfortunately don't offer the level of control available with some of the other options in the test, which is a shame when other DxO software provides much more refined localised adjustments.

HDR Efex Pro remains a powerful and enticing option for processing HDR images, but the limitations of the localised adjustments compared to some of the other options in the test, which could have been improved by DxO, put it at a disadvantage. However, it is an extremely easy-to-use option and the effects of the tone compression are undoubtedly pleasing – these range from near natural to deep and obvious HDR. But the fact that the suite of seven plug-ins costs just £59 makes it a compelling choice despite the aforementioned limitations.

Amateur Photographer Testbench ★★★

Photomatix has as many as 41 available presets

Photomatix Pro 6

● £70 ● www.hdrsoft.com

IN THE early days of HDR photography, Photomatix Pro was the best and only software worth considering, but this has now changed with many other great options available. But despite this growth in competition, Photomatix has maintained a loyal following thanks to the distinctive HDR style it produces – one that's a strong HDR effect with almost metallic-looking colours – and the fact that it's now also possible to create natural-looking HDR images.

Loading images into Photomatix couldn't be simpler, with easy-to-use dialogue windows that guide you through the process of image alignment, deghosting (including selective and auto deghosting) and the removal of chromatic aberration, etc. Once through these initial steps you're taken to the main interface, which remains one of the more difficult options available, but when you get used to the wide variety of controls on offer is also one of the most powerful – with nine approaches to creating HDR images available alongside 41 presets that can be used as an end result or a starting point to be fine-tuned. If working with a single image, 34 presets are available.

Blending processed images

Localised adjustments are also available through the use of a Brush or Lasso tool to make local changes to saturation, colour temperature and brightness, on all colour channels or individual channels. It would be an improvement to see the inclusion of a graduated filter for fast sky and foreground adjustments, but what's on offer as it stands is easy to use and far superior to the local adjustments available in HDR Efex. Another interesting feature that has come with this latest version of Photomatix is the ability to blend the processed HDR image with one of the individual exposures. This can be applied locally using the brush or lasso tool, or globally.

Photomatix has come a long way since earlier versions to maintain its position as one of the leading HDR software options available. And while it's not the easiest software to use at first, once you get used to the controls on offer it becomes an impressive and powerful option for HDR photography.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

The level of control is severely limited in Elements

Photoshop Elements 2019

● £90 ● www.adobe.com

IF YOU'RE new to photography, chances are you'll be a user of Adobe Photoshop Elements. For beginners, Elements remains a popular way to learn how to use Adobe image-editing software without the complexity of using the full-fat version of Photoshop CC, which can be intimidating for novices. As part of Elements's beginner-focused proposition, there are three main sections of the software: Basic, Guided and Expert, which are fairly self-explanatory.

To create an HDR image in Elements you'll need to use one of the Photomerge Exposure guided edits within the Guided edit area. You can merge both raw files and edited JPEGs or TIFFs like all of the other software, but you'll need to load the images into the Photo Bin at the bottom of the interface and select them all before beginning the guided edit.

Automatic and manual control

Once you're within the Photomerge Exposure guided edit you're presented with two main options: Automatic and Manual. And it's safe to say at this point that Manual isn't very good at all and is best avoided, while Automatic will produce reasonable results fairly quickly and easily. With just two blending options and three sliders you really can't go wrong, but this limited amount of control over the way images are blended together and detail is recovered, means that this is far from the best option available. In fact, the quality of the final HDR image you can create is definitely lower than that of all the other software in this round-up.

Adobe Photoshop Elements will undoubtedly allow you to create HDR images, but the level of control, features and final image quality are severely limited compared to all the others available here. Adobe Photoshop Elements is a great software option for basic raw-image processing and general image editing, but certainly not for more specialist techniques such as HDR. As a starting point, the software will suffice while you're learning how to shoot exposure-bracketed images for successful blending, but if you're serious about HDR you'd really be best considering one of the other options.

Amateur Photographer Testbench ★★

Presets range from natural to a harsh, heavy look

Aurora HDR 2019

● £92 ● www.skylum.com

ONCE exclusively available for Mac, Skylum's (formally Macphun) Aurora HDR 2019 is available across platforms to provide an HDR-editing experience developed with the world-renowned HDR photographer, Trey Ratcliff. With yearly product cycles, this software has come a long way in just a few years to become one of the most powerful and, indeed, popular options available.

The level of control available in Aurora HDR 2019 is truly astounding, and for the most advanced HDR photographers it offers everything you could ever need and more in terms of features and functionality. It's quite safe to say that it's by far the most advanced HDR software in this test. And despite the advanced controls, even beginners can achieve great results with the minimum of effort thanks to the large number of presets available.

Working with presets

Creating HDR images is a simple process. First you're guided through the first few steps to get your multiple exposures merged together. Once the shots have been merged, the HDR image will open in the Aurora interface which is well laid out and fairly easy to navigate, with the majority of controls on the right, the main menu running along the top and the presets at the bottom. The presets can be applied as a starting point before manually adjusting settings, a full end result for beginners, or even as a layer that can have opacity controlled or areas masked out. The presets range from natural through to a harsh and heavy HDR look.

When working with images you can even create Layers, and if you save an Aurora HDR Document you can save these Layers and other localised adjustments for non-destructive editing at a later date.

Aurora HDR 2019 is the most fully featured standalone HDR software available today, with the ability to create natural or strong effects. The level of control can be overwhelming at times but using the presets as a starting point and experimenting is a great way to get to grips with what's on offer. If you're serious about HDR photography this software must be a serious consideration.

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

You can create your own presets in Lightroom CC

Lightroom CC Classic

● From £119 per year
● www.adobe.com

NOTHING beats being able to use the software you already have to apply a specific editing technique to your images, and Adobe has remained extremely competitive when it comes to the functionality available in Lightroom CC Classic. Merge to HDR has been available in the software for a few years and provides an easy way to produce HDR images using the tools you're familiar with.

To combine several exposures into a single HDR image, you simply have to select the source images and initiate Merge to HDR. Here you're presented with an incredibly simple interface where you can ensure auto alignment is active and select the required level of deghosting with a handy visual overlay that helps you to select the most appropriate amount. There's an Auto Settings option in this window, which applies a number of HDR settings, but the results are poor so it's best to apply settings manually later.

Powerful controls

Once a set of images has been merged, a new DNG file containing the exposure data of the constituent images is created. This can be stacked with the individual exposures if you check the relevant box in the HDR Merge dialogue window to keep the thumbnail bar tidy. At this stage, all you need to do is use Shadows and Highlights to recover detail, alongside the use of all other powerful controls and local adjustment tools that are available in Lightroom. Overall results look natural, strong HDR isn't possible, and if you use Lightroom already you won't need to learn or purchase a new software program. Unlike the dedicated HDR options in the test, presets aren't available, but you can create your own as you can with any settings in Lightroom.

It's worth noting that the Creative Cloud Photography Plan includes Photoshop CC and Lightroom CC, so it comes as part of a professional software package. And while it's not as extensively featured as Aurora HDR 2019, it remains a very strong competitor.

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

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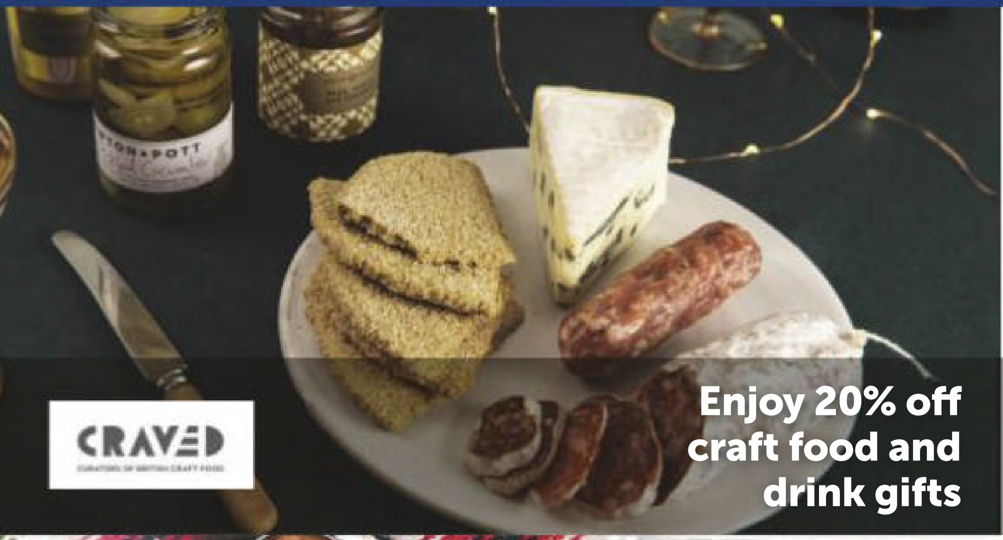

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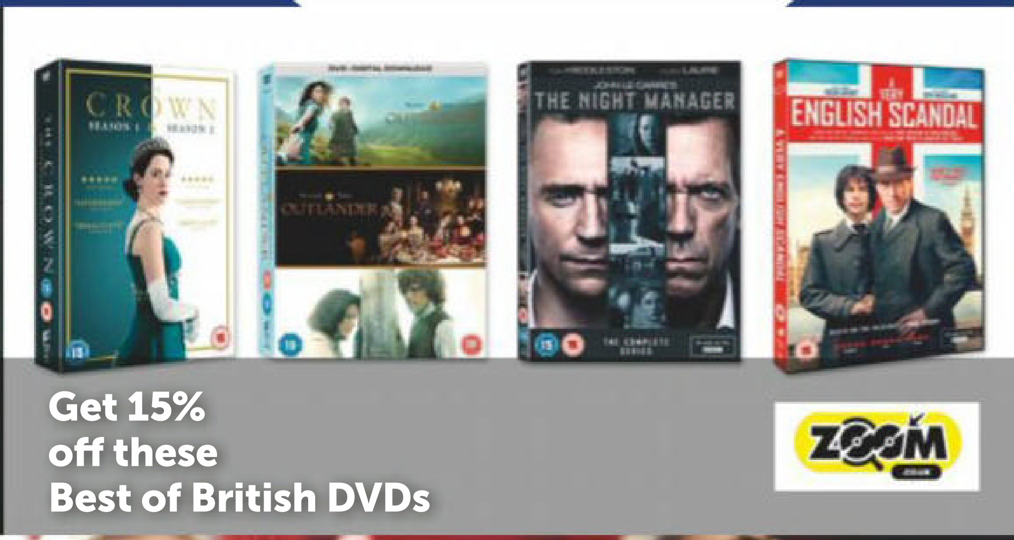

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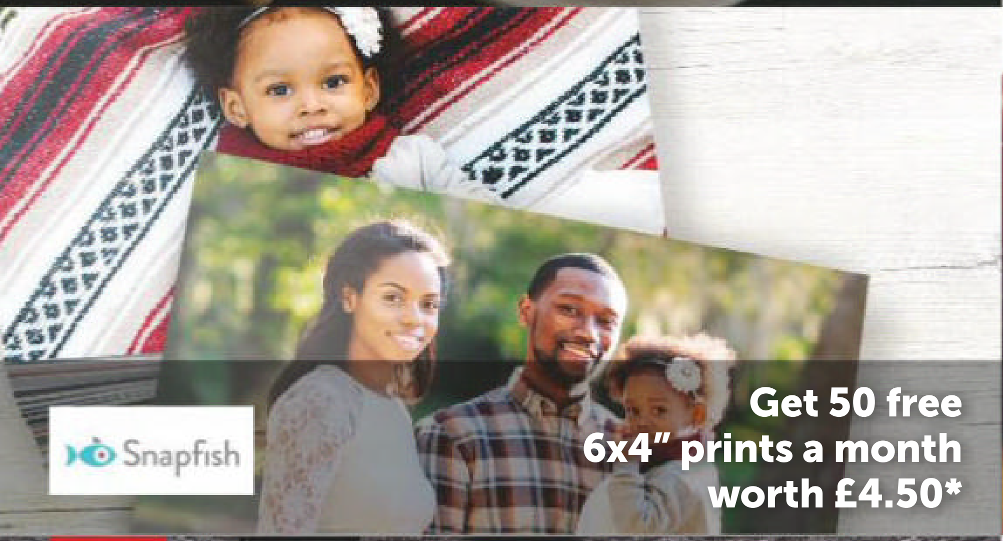

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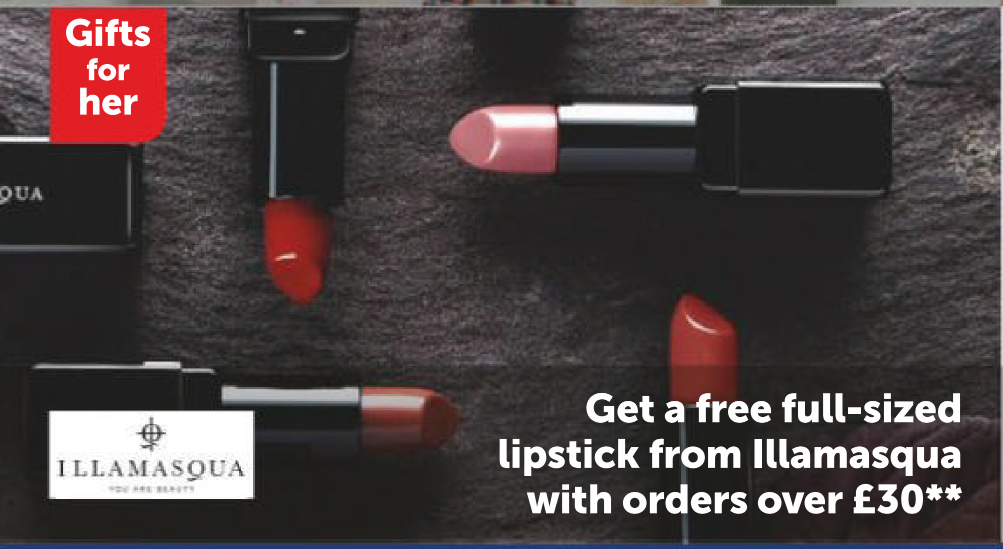

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iStorage diskAshur²

Nigel Atherton tests a secure portable storage device

- £219 ● istorage-uk.com

STORAGE may not be sexy but it's a necessary ongoing expense for photographers in the digital age, especially with rising pixel counts and the move to 4K video. While cloud and desktop storage have their place, there will always be a need for a reliable portable device for backing up and transporting image files in the field, and there are many reasons why photographers may need it to be password protected. For example, you could be photographing commercially sensitive subjects or, in this post-GDPR world, holding private client data such as contact and payment details.

iStorage produces a range of encrypted storage devices, including datAshur USB pen drives and diskAshur DT desktop units, but the diskAshur² range is its best-selling portable device. Our 1TB review sample fits in a jeans pocket and weighs around 200g. It comes with a short integrated USB 3.1 cable that also provides power, and slots into a groove in the body when not in use.

Its selling point is what the company describes as military-grade 256-bit full disk hardware encryption, which meets US government security standards. The telephone-style alphanumeric keypad on the side is linked to a dedicated hardware-based secure micro-processor. Three PIN codes of between seven and 15 characters can be set, if required: a user PIN, an admin PIN and a self-destruct PIN which instantly deletes all the data.

The diskAshur² is built to withstand whatever is thrown at it, whether accidental or deliberate. Its rubberised coating and a water-resistant epoxy-coated keypad protects it from day-to-day knocks and scrapes while an armoury of self-defence mechanisms defend it from malicious attack, including, intriguingly, by laser (so take note, Bond villains). On sensing a hacking attempt the drive automatically enters a deadlock frozen state. Even the internal components are protected by a layer of epoxy resin to prevent tampering or removal.

Verdict

The claimed read and write speeds of 148Mbps and 141Mbps are optimistic, but performance is within the average range for such devices. However if speed is critical, you'll be better off with one of the SSD versions. Overall the iStorage diskAshur² is very expensive for a hard drive. But while you could buy a regular hard drive for a quarter of the price and use software encryption, it wouldn't be as secure.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES

Options
The diskAshur² is available in four colours, and with six HDD and six SSD capacities.

Military-grade security
Designed and programmed to resist all 'Brute Force' attacks.

Tough build
The rugged, rubberised casing is rated to IP56 standard for water and dust resistance. A protective zip case is also supplied.

PIN protection
A 7- to 15-digit PIN code can be set for both user and administrator. After 15 incorrect attempts the data is wiped.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

At a glance

- USB 3.1 portable encrypted hard drive
- Capacities up to 5TB
- AES-XTS 256-bit hardware encryption
- OS & platform independent
- 124x84x19mm, 200g

WHICH MODEL?

The iStorage DiskAshur² comes in a choice of colours – blue, red, green or black – and is available either as a hard disk drive (HDD) in a range of capacities from 500GB to 5TB, or as a more expensive solid state drive (SSD) in capacities from 128GB to 4TB. Prices range from £159 for the 500GB HDD model to an eye-watering £1,899 for the 4TB SSD. Our 1TB HDD costs £219.

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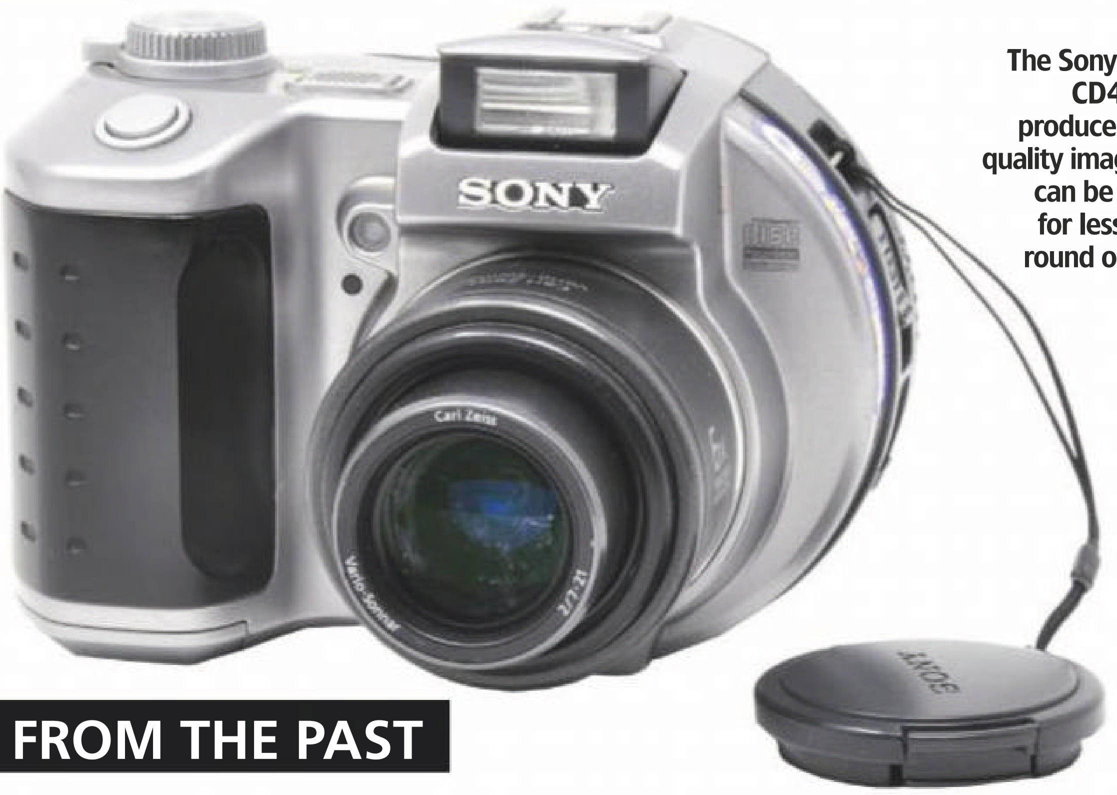


The Sony Mavica CD400 still produces good-quality images and can be bought for less than a round of drinks

BLAST FROM THE PAST

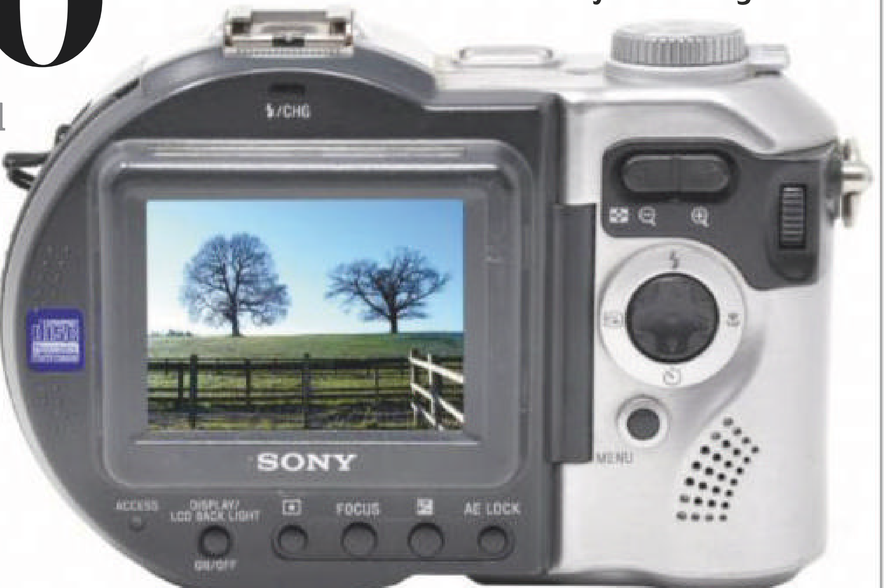
Sony Mavica CD400

John Wade tries out an unusual retro digital camera

LAUNCHED 2002

PRICE AT LAUNCH £600

GUIDE PRICE NOW £25 (recent eBay purchase)



The controls on the back of the body will be familiar to any modern digital user

One interesting aspect of early digital cameras is the different types of media used to record images. Before the SD cards commonly employed today, CompactFlash cards, Memory Sticks, PC Cards and even 3.5in floppy discs were all used. The CD400 went one better: it recorded its images on mini compact discs (CDs).

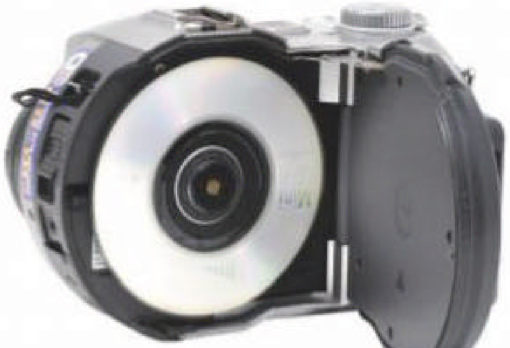
This is a chunky little camera measuring 14x10x9cm and incorporating a comfortable hand grip. The lens is a Carl Zeiss Vario Sonnar f/2-2.5 3x optical zoom; it sports five-area multi-point autofocus, multi-pattern metering, shutter speeds to 1/1000sec and the 1x1.8in sensor delivers 4MP images. Flash is built in, but there's a hotshoe for adding an external flashgun.

Using the camera is a little different from today's digital models. First off, everything moves a lot slower than you might expect. When the mini-CD is inserted it must first be initialised and formatted through the camera's set-up menu. Shutter and aperture priority, programme and manual settings are available; wide and tele adjustments for the zoom lens are on the back of the hand grip; shutter delay is minimal but noticeable. The lithium-ion battery is hidden in the handgrip, but the charger plugs into a slot in the side of the camera body, charging the battery in situ.

Pictures are previewed and then viewed on the large 2.5in LCD screen, but before they can be seen on a computer, the disc must be finalised in the camera, again via the set-up menu. After that the mini-CD drops into the central slot of the disc drive found on most computers. At 300dpi, the camera's images measure only 19.24x14.43cm, but printed at 200dpi, an A4 picture is easily attainable. Using the camera today is a little tedious and somewhat primitive, but it's also a lot of fun and cheap to buy.

What's good Quality images on a shoestring, compact size, video capability.

What's bad No optical viewfinder, needs its dedicated battery charger to work.



The mini-CD slots into the back of the camera

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Cheetahs, Corsac Foxes, Lions,
Birds of Prey, Hamerton, Cambridgeshire
April 6th; Special access. Static & in-flight bird shots. Cheetahs & Tigers in superb natural settings. Malayan and White Bengal Tiger. Maned Wolf, Lynx and Corsac Foxes. £129

Golden Eagle Experience, Leics.
April 7th, May 5th; Max 8 persons. Static & flying of Golden Eagle in stunning location. Other birds from Owls, Hawks, Goshawk £89

Bats & Fill-in Flash Tuition, Oxford
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Small Cats Workshop, Herts
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June 10th, 24th; Amazing diving shots. Sail around Bass Rock without landing on the island. 1 hour of throwing fish in the sea for Gannets to catch. A spectacle that must be seen to be believed.£99

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- Venue 2, Bamburgh, Northumberland.
- Now including Snowy & Short Eared Owls
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Big Cats Workshop, Kent
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Big Cats Pro Workshop, Kent
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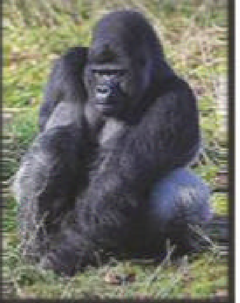

For more information, please visit the website or call John or Nadine Wright on 01664 474040 (anytime) or 07779 648850.
We will be most happy to discuss any workshop in detail, or to send more detailed information to anyone without internet access.
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BRONICA SQA COMPLETE WITH 80mm,WLF,120BK	MINT- £345.00
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BRONICA 65mm F4 ZENZANON PS FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £145.00
BRONICA 110mm F4 PS ZENZANON MACRO FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £365.00
BRONICA 150mm F4 PS ZENZANON FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £145.00
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MAMIYA 645 1000S METERED PRISM & WLF & BACK	MINT- £299.00
MAMIYA 645 SUPER WITH AE PRISM 80mm COMPLETE	MINT £365.00
MAMIYA M645J COMPLETE WITH 80mm f2.8	MINT- £299.00
MAMIYA 50mm f4 SHIFT LENS FOR 645 ETC	MINT-CASED £365.00
MAMIYA 80mm f1.9 SEKOR C FOR 645 etc	MINT £299.00
MAMIYA 150mm f3.5 SEKOR C FOR 645 SUPER etc	MINT £145.00
MAMIYA 150mm F4.5 "G" WITH HOOD FOR MAMIYA 6	MINT £295.00
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MAMIYA 250mm F4.5 LENS FOR RZ	MINT- £195.00
MAMIYA 210mm F4 SEKOR C FOR 645	MINT CASED £195.00
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NIKON 35 - 70mm f3.3/4.5 A/F LENS	EXC++ £49.00
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Nikon Manual Focus

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NIKON 45mm F2.8 GN NIKKOR	MINT- £199.00
NIKON 50mm f1.4 AI	MINT- £195.00
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Olympus Manual

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OLYMPUS 50mm F1.8 ZUIKO	MINT £39.00
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SONY

A7 Mark III

25.3 megapixels
10 fps
4K Video

A7 Mark III Body £1849

A7 Mark III Body	£1849
A7 Mark III + 28-70mm	£1999
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A7 Mark II + 28 -70mm	£1399

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10 fps
4K Video

A7R Mark III Body £2899

A7R Mark II Body	£1999
A7S Mark II Body	£2399
A7S Body	£1699
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A6500

24 megapixels
11 fps
4K Video

A6500 From £1279

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A6400 Body	£949
A6400 + 16-50mm	£999

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24 megapixels
11 fps
1080p movie mode

A6000 From £429

A6000 Body	£429
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A6300 Body	£779
A6300 + 16-50mm	£849

SONY

Gain control of expressive freedom

The Sony A7 III, with newly developed 24.2MP full-frame sensor

The third iteration of Sony's popular A7 brings even more advancements to the company's coveted CSC line-up. The Mark III boasts a newly developed back-illuminated 24.2MP full-frame Exmor R CMOS sensor and a redeveloped BIONZ X processing engine. Add 693 phase-detection and 425 contrast detection AF points, 15-stops of dynamic range and 4K HDR video, and this latest mirrorless device is sure to prove popular with photographers and filmmakers alike.

A7 III Body
£1849
Lens available separately

Nikon

Z 7

New

45.7 megapixels
9.0 fps
4K Video

Z 7 with Adapter £3499

Z 7 with Adapter	£3499
Z 7 + 24-70mm	£3999
Z 7 + Adapter + 24-70mm	£4099

Z 6

New

24.5 megapixels
12.0 fps
4K Video

Z 6 with Adapter £2199

Z 6 with Adapter	£2199
Z 6 + 24-70mm	£2699
Z 6 + Adapter + 24-70mm	£2799

D850

45.7 megapixels
6.0 fps
4K Video

D850 Body £3499

D850 Body	£2999

D500
Black

20.9 megapixels
10.0 fps
4K Video

D500 From £1879

D500 + 16-80mm	£2549

LUMIX

GX9

21 megapixels
9.0 fps
4K Video

GX9 From £579

GX9 Body	£579
GX9 + 12-60mm	£779
GX80 + 12-32mm	£379

GH5S

10.2 megapixels
60 fps
4K Video

GH5S From £1749

GH5S Body	£1749
GH5 Body	£1399
GH5 + 12-60mm	£1449
GH5 + 12-60mm Leica	£1749

G9

16 megapixels
20.3 fps
4K Video

G9 From £1149

G9 Body	£1149
G9 + 12-60mm	£1299
G9 + 12-60mm Leica	£1699
G80 Body	£629
G80 + 12-60mm	£749

RECOMMENDED LENSES:

Panasonic 20mm f1.7 G II ASPH	£249
Panasonic 25mm f1.7 G ASPH	£148
Panasonic 42.5mm f1.7 G ASPH OIS	£299
Panasonic 8 18mm f2.8 4 ASPH Vario	£1049
Panasonic 12 35mm f2.8 II Lumix G X	£799
Panasonic 14 42mm f3.5 5.6 G X ASPH OIS	£299
Panasonic 14 140mm f3.5 5.6 G ASPH OIS	£549
Panasonic 45 175mm f4.0 5.6	£349
Panasonic 100 300mm f4 5.6 II	£487
Panasonic 100 400mm f4 6.3	£1269

OLYMPUS

OM-D E-M1X

New

20.4 megapixels
18 fps

OM-D E-M1X £2799

OM-D E-M1 II Body	£1399
OM-D E-M1 II + 12-40mm	£1999
OM-D E-M5 II Body	£799
OM-D E-M5 II + 12-40mm	£1229

E-M10 III
Black or Silver

17.2 megapixels
8.6 fps

E-M10 III From £529

OM-D E-M10 III Body	£529
OM-D E-M10 III + 14-42mm	£579
OM-D E-M10 II Body	£429
OM-D E-M10 II + 14-42mm	£529

RECOMMENDED LENSES:

Olympus 25mm f1.2 Pro	£929
Olympus 45mm f1.2 Pro	£1049
Olympus 7-14mm f2.8 Pro	£929
Olympus 12-40mm f2.8 Pro	£759
Olympus 12-100mm f4 Pro	£1699
Olympus 14-150mm f4-5.6	£469

PENTAX

K-1 II

36.7 megapixels
6.4 fps
Full Frame CMOS Sensor

K-1 II Body £1799

K-1 II Body	£1799
KP Body	£920
K-70	from £599

RECOMMENDED LENSES:

Pentax 50mm f1.4 FA*	£1199
Pentax 100mm f2.8 Macro	£477
Pentax 15-30mm f2.8	£1449
Pentax 16-85mm f3.5-5.6	£499
Pentax 28-105mm f3.5-5.6	£477
Pentax 55-300mm f4.5-6.3	£389

FUJIFILM

X-H1
Black

24.3 megapixels
8.0 fps

X-H1 From £1199

X-H1	£1199
X-H1 + Grip	£1299

X-T3
Black or silver

New

26.1 megapixels
20 fps
4K Video

X-T3 From £1349

X-T3 Body	£1349
X-T3 + 18-55mm	£1699
X-T2 Body	£999

FUJINON LENSES

Fujifilm 23mm f2 R WR XF	£409
Fujifilm 35mm f2 R WR XF	£369
Fujifilm 80mm f2.8 XF LM OIS WR	£1149
Fujifilm 10 24mm f4 R OIS XF	£829
Fujifilm 16 55mm f2.8 LM WR	£899
Fujifilm 55 200mm f3.5 4.8 R LM OIS XF	£626

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EOS 5D Mark IV Body **£2999**

30.4 megapixels | 7.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS sensor

EOS 5D Mark IV Body **£2999**

Canon PRO PARTNER

Capture the future with the new full-frame mirrorless EOS R

Canon joins the full-frame mirrorless party with the EOS R. This 30.3-megapixel camera sports Dual Pixel CMOS AF and has an impressive 5,655 AF points for quick precise autofocus for stills and video.

EOS R Body	**£2349**
EOS R + 24-105mm	**£3269**
RF 50mm f1.2 L USM	**£2349**
RF 28-70mm f2 L USM	**£3049**

30.3 megapixels | 780 fps | 4K30P movie mode

EOS R Body From **£2349**

Canon PRO PARTNER
EOS 77D

24.2 megapixels | 6.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS sensor

EOS 77D From **£699**

EOS 77D + 18-55mm	**£799**
EOS 77D + 18-135mm	**£1045**

Canon PRO PARTNER
EOS 7D Mark II

20.2 megapixels | 10.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

EOS 7D Mark II Body **£1349**

EOS 7D Mark II Body	**£1349**

Canon PRO PARTNER
EOS 6D Mark II

26.2 megapixels | 6.5 fps | 1080p movie mode | Full Frame CMOS sensor

EOS 6D Mark II from **£1499**

EOS 6D Mark II Body	**£1499**
EOS 6D Mark II + 24-105mm	**£1849**

Canon PRO PARTNER
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EOS 1D X Mark II Body **£4999**

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Gorillapod Kit 5K	£137

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600EX II-RT £519

430EX III-RT £269

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MR-14EX II £699

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SB-5000 £569

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OLYMPUS **Flashguns:**

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FL-600R £279

Flashguns:

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AF 360FGZ II £249

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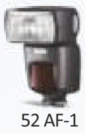
44 AF-2 £169

M400 £199



52 AF-1 £199

64 AF-1 £309

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15 MS-1 £299

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EF 610 DG ST £109

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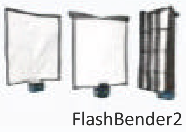
FlashBender2 £37.95



FlashBender2 XL Pro Lighting System £94.99

INTERFIT

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Folding Softbox From £33.99

Reflector Bracket £28.99

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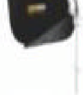
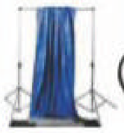


Ezybox Hotshoe From £129

EzyBalance Grey/ White £24.95



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TriFlip Kits From £79

Urban Collapsible £174

Reflectors:

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75cm	£44
95cm	£69
120cm	£84

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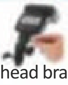

Tilthead bracket £29.95

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10 20mm f3.5 EX DC HSM	£329
17 70mm f2.8 4.0 DC OS HSM	£349
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18 250mm f3.5 6.3 DC Macro OS HSM	£349
18 300mm f3.6 6.3 C DC Macro OS HSM	£369
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24 105mm f4 DG OS HSM	£599
50 100mm f1.8 DC HSM Art	£949
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100 400mm f5 6.3 DG OS HSM	£699
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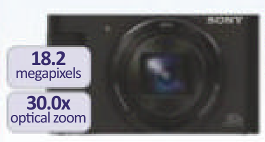

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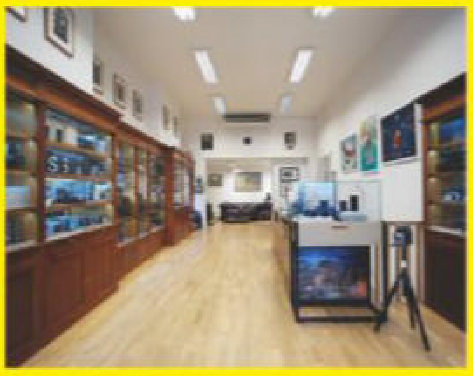

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Lens	Price	Lens	Price
24mm f/1.4L Mk II USM	£1,419.00	16-35mm f/4.0L IS USM	£949.00
24mm f/2.8 IS USM	£519.00	17-40mm f/4.0L USM	£709.00
35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM	£369.00	18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM	£429.00
50mm f/1.2 L USM	£1,239.00	24-70mm f/2.8L II USM	£1,729.00
50mm f/1.4 USM	£339.00	24-70mm f/4.0L IS USM	£789.00
50mm f/1.8 STM	£119.00	24-105mm f/4L IS II USM	£949.00
100mm f/2.8 USM Macro	£519.00	28-300mm f/3.5-5.6L IS	£2,289.00
100mm f/2.8L Macro IS	£849.00	55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£299.00
135mm f/2.0L USM	£959.00	70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM	£1,599.00
180mm f/3.5L USM	£1,269.00	70-200mm f/2.8L IS III USM	£2,149.00
200mm f/2.0L IS USM	£5,439.00	70-200mm f/4.0L IS USM	£999.00
300mm f/2.8L USM IS II	£5,599.00	70-200mm f/4.0L IS II USM	£1,299.00
8-15mm f/4L Fisheye USM	£1,149.00	70-300mm f/4.0-5.6 IS II USM	£464.00
10-18mm IS STM	£239.00	70-300mm f/4.0-5.6L IS USM	£1,229.00
10-22mm f/3.5-4.5	£529.00	100-400mm L IS USM II	£1,999.00
11-24mm f/4L USM	£2,789.00	1.4x III Extender	£409.00
16-35mm f/2.8L III USM	£2,049.00	2.0x III Extender	£399.00

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Lens	Price
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14mm f/2.5 Mk II	£299.00
30mm f/2.8 ASPH	£269.00
42.5mm f/1.7 ASPH	£299.00
7-14mm f/4.0	£739.00
35-100mm f/2.8 O.I.S	£969.00
45-175mm f/4.0-5.6	£349.00
LEICA 100-400mm	£1,299.00

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26.1 MEGA PIXELS | 11 fps | 3.0" | 4K

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Fujifilm X-H1
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XF 35mm f/2 R WR	£369.00
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XF 10-24mm f/4 OIS	£829.00
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XF 50-140mm O.I.S	£1,299.00
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Expected late February
£1,399.00
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Available in Canon, Nikon or Sigma fits.

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19mm f/2.8 DN	£149.00	18-200mm DC OS HSM	£289.00
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8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM	£599.00	150-600mm f/5-6.3 OS | C	£789.00
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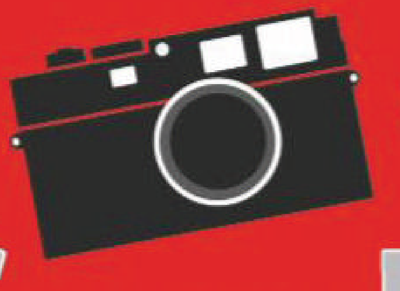

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18-135mm F3.5-5.6 LM OIS WR XF	£479 - £529
18-55mm F2.8-4 R LM OIS XF	£279 - £349
23mm F1.4 XF R	£589
23mm F2 XF	£369
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55-200mm F3.5-4.8 R LM OIS XF	£459 - £479
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30mm F3.5 M.Zuiko Macro	£159
40-150mm F2.8 M.Zuiko Pro	£849 - £879
40-150mm F4-5.6 ED M.Zuiko	£79
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24mm F1.8 ZA E	£529
28-70mm F3.5-5.6 FE OSS	£199 - £299
30mm F2.8 EX DN Sigma	£79
30mm F3.5 E Macro	£99
35mm F2 Loxia Zeiss	£749
35mm F2.8 FE ZA	£399 - £449
50mm F2 Loxia Zeiss	£519
85mm F1.4 FE GM	£1,289
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15-45mm F3.5-6.3 IS STM EF-M	£89 - £119
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15mm F2.8 EF Fisheye	£449
17-55mm F2.8 EFS IS USM	£339 - £379
17-85mm F4-5.6 IS USM	£129
17mm F4.0 L TS-E	£1,299 - £1,549
18-135mm F3.5-5.6 IS STM	£299
18-135mm F3.5-5.6 IS USM	£319
18-55mm F3.5-5.6 EFS IS	£49
20-35mm F3.5-4.5 USM	£119 - £129
24-70mm F2.8 L USM	£499
24-70mm F2.8 L USM II	£989 - £1,049
24-70mm F4 L IS USM	£539 - £549
24mm F1.4 L USM	£629 - £649
24mm F1.4 L USM MKII	£799 - £849
24mm F2.8 EF	£179
24mm F3.5 L TS-E	£689
24mm F3.5 L TS-E MkII	£1,099 - £1,199
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28-135mm F3.5-5.6 IS USM	£119
28-300mm F3.5-5.6 L IS USM	£1,099
35-70mm F3.5-4.5 EF	£39
35mm F1.4 L USM	£689 - £749
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50mm F1.8 EF II	£39
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600mm F4 L IS USM	£4,399
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70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM II	£949 - £1,249
70-200mm F4 L IS USM	£549 - £649
70-200mm F4 L USM	£319 - £359
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70-300mm F4-5.6 L IS USM	£689 - £699
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80-200mm F4.5-5.6 EF II	£39 - £49
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85mm F1.4 L IS USM	£1,149
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90mm F2.8 Tilt-Shift Lens	£649
100-300mm F4.5-5.6 USM	£99
100mm F2 USM	£199
100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM	£599
135mm F2 L USM	£599
180mm F3.5 EF L Macro USM	£739
300mm F2.8 L IS USM	£2,149 - £2,399
300mm F2.8 L IS USM MKII	£4,189
300mm F4 L IS USM	£489
400mm F2.8 L IS USM	£3,649
400mm F2.8 L USM	£2,389
400mm F4 DO IS USM	£1,749 - £1,799
500mm F4 L IS USM II	£6,499
500mm F4.5 L USM	£1,989

Canon FD Lenses

28-85mm F4 FD	£49 - £79
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35mm F3.5 EX	£29
70-150mm F4.5 FD	£25
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E-M10 MkIII Body Only	£449
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E-P2 Body Only	£49
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EOS 5D MKIII Body Only	£1,149 - £1,199
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EOS 5DS R Body Only	£1,699
EOS 6D Body Only	£549
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EOS 7D + BG-E7 Grip	£339
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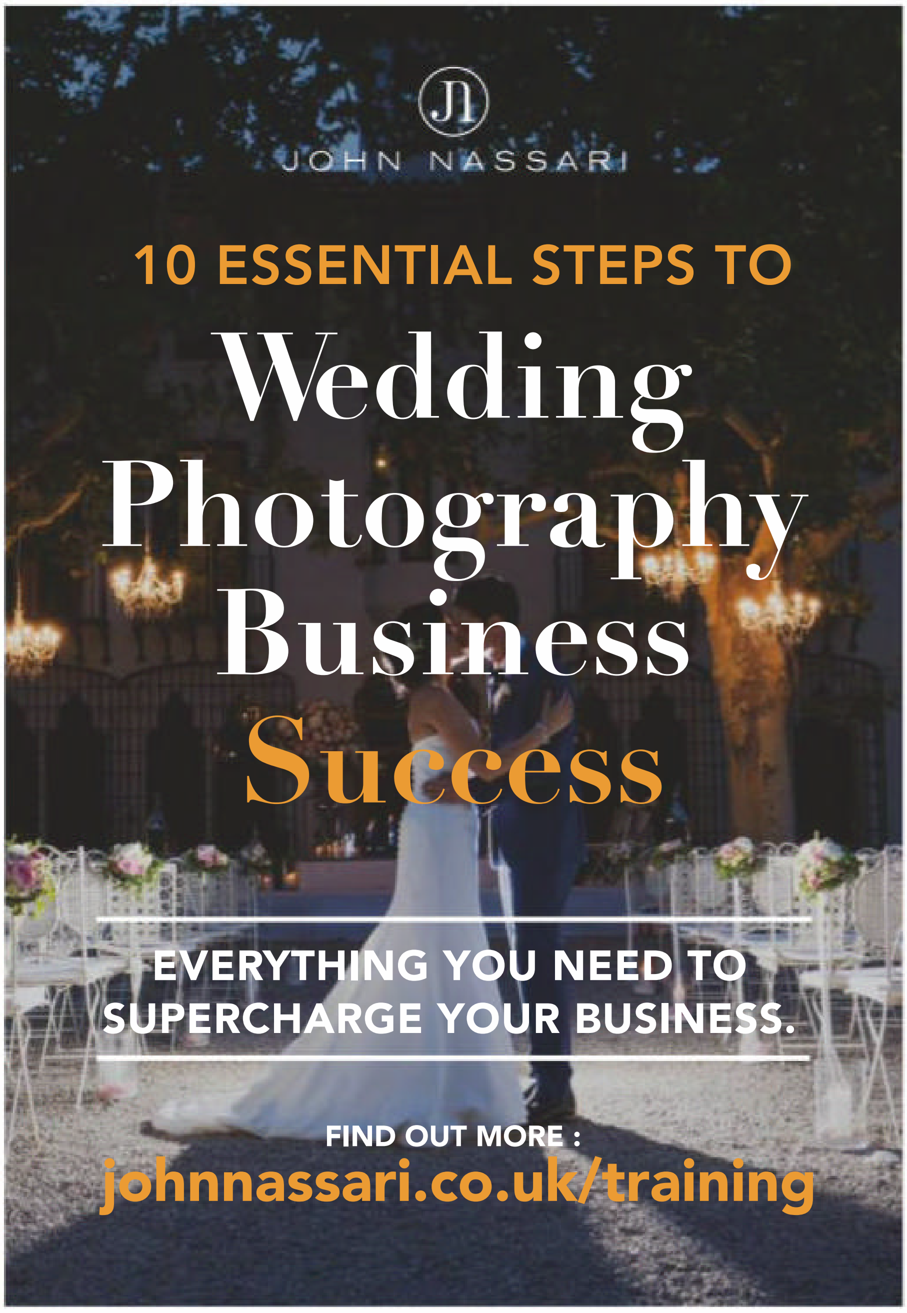
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers...

'The Reluctant Bride' by Christopher Connorton

Princess Irene of Hochste, 1573-1652, was betrothed at the age of seven to Prince Henry of Nahemöglich but he died before the wedding and no suitable suitor came up again until about 1591, in the shape of the Gräf von Schlechterdings. This was painted to impress him. It clearly worked: they were married the following year. Everything about it, though, has a meaning which transcends the obvious.

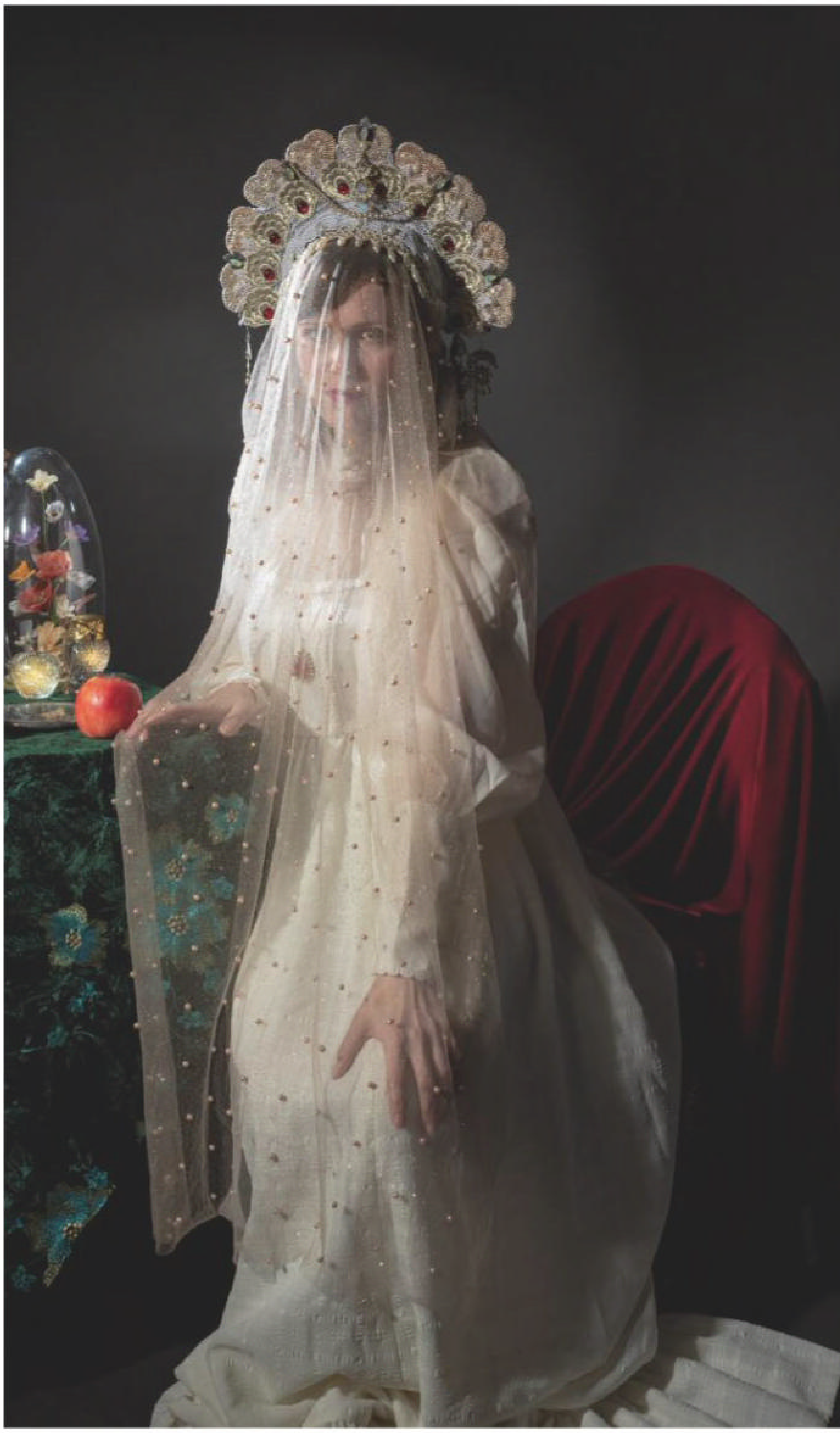
The symbolism of the white dress is clear, while the glass dome symbolises her carefully preserved (or at least alleged) virginity, as does the unbitten apple, but her pose – leaning eagerly, almost aggressively forward – bespeaks her strength and her impatience with stultifying court life.

At first sight, the portrait is over-lit on the left, and might be seen as drawing too much attention to her bosom. This is said, however, to reflect the tastes of the Gräf, who was several years older. The famous Przcynzki ruby, hanging around her neck, serves the same purpose, and like the improbable red jewels in her headdress may serve to make her look paler. This would have been highly desirable at the time, as she notoriously refused to use the white lead make-up favoured by her contemporary Queen Elizabeth I: she is probably a lot better looking to modern eyes than she would have seemed in her own era.

Ethereality

The veil is beautifully executed, and arguably easier (though more time consuming) to paint than to light in a modern photograph. The way that both her hands are behind the veil is unusual, as is the way she holds them. Is she reaching for the apple with her right hand? Does her left hand stand surrogate for the Gräf's, or is she reaching out towards him? The rich textures and colours are typical of the time, though the red of the chair is especially interesting, and the strange glow around her head betokens ethereality. Although the painter appears to have been inspired by Caravaggio (1571-1610) we see here a demureness Caravaggio himself seldom, if ever, achieved.

The above is all nonsense, of course, made up from the whole cloth, albeit with Chris's permission. I wanted to show how any critique depends, to use the Californian phrase, on 'where you are coming from'. It's a fairly straight shot of a very pretty girl surrounded with strange props and rich textures. Look at the shadows and highlights and you can see how it's lit. And it shows how once you have a great idea, all you need is the competence to carry it through. AP



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Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at **www.rogerandfrances.eu**). Every two weeks in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. **In AP 23 February he considers an image from the US Library of Congress.**

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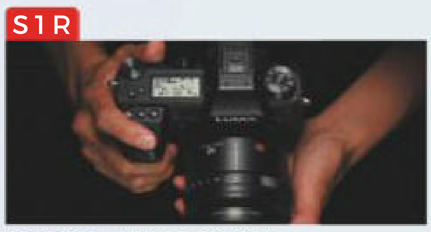

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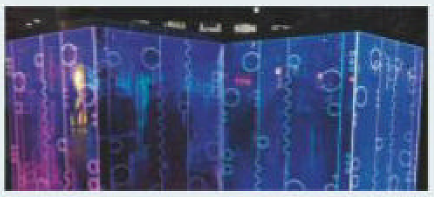

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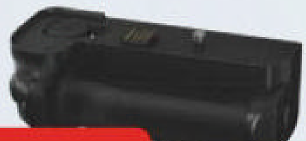

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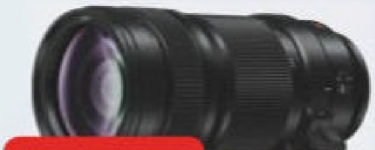

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